1989

ASGC

2013

FOCUS

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF

THE ASSOCIATION OF SRI LANKAN GRADUATES OF CANADA

இலங்கைப் பட்டதாரிகள் சங்கம் — கனடா







Presenters & Audience
Career Counseling Workshop - Markham

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www.asgc.ca

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ASGC MISSION STATEMENT

By providing a Forum to the Graduates of Sri Lankan origin in Canada for meeting, interacting, and sharing of academic and professional expertise and experience, ASGC will help identify and address problems of common concern to the Sri Lankan Community in general and of the Graduates entering the job market and the Undergraduates in Sri Lanka in particular, and become one of the most respected provider of valuable service to the Canadian Community at large.

The aims and objectives of ASGC include:

♦ *Playing a leadership role in promoting charitableness and voluntarism in the Sri Lankan community in general, and among the graduates in particular, and focus on channeling their organized efforts in identifying and addressing problems in the areas of graduate employment and youth education;*

♦ *Rendering all possible assistance to new immigrants, who are new to the Canadian job market, including getting recognition of their qualifications and finding jobs in which their expertise and experience would be recognized, and facilitating their smooth settlement in Canada;*

♦ *Organizing meetings and seminars aimed at improving and enhancing the knowledge and understanding of subjects of interest and importance to the Sri Lankan community in general and to the Graduates in particular;*

♦ *Organizing and delivery of support and assistance to the Universities and students in North and East of Sri Lanka with books, computers, teaching aids and materials etc, and offering helps for programs aimed at helping students and undergraduates;*

♦ *Organizing events and activities focusing on finding solutions to problems of serious concern surfacing in the Sri Lankan Community from time to time; and*

♦ *Organizing events and activities that would help bring out the hidden talents, expertise and experience of Sri Lankan Graduates in the service of the Canadian society at large.*



ASGC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2013

Seated (L-R): Suganja Sinnathamby (Asst. Treasurer), C.Ramanathan (Vice-President), Pon Balendran (President), Raj Thavaratnasingam (Secretary) and Yaso Somalingam.

Standing (L-R): Samy Ramachandran, Dr.K.Theivendirarajah, Nel Ketharanathan, Dr.E.Balasundram, Dr.V.Manivannan and Dr.S.Sivanayagamoorthy.

Absent: Thiva Kulasingam (Treasurer), Thaves Ponambalam (Asst. Secretary), Sathy Thurairajah, Harindra Sebastian and Raj Rasaratnam.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



It gives me great pleasure and pride to write this message as the President of the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada to the Association's annual publication "Focus" magazine which is to be released at the annual dinner. The ASGC has successfully completed another year of community services successfully with the dedicated services of the members of executive committee and I would like to express my sincere gratitude for their passion and commitment for servicing the community on behalf of the Association. The annual dinner and release of Focus magazine has always been a reminder to our members that the current term of the executive committee is about to come to an end and time for a fresh start again with new ideas and vision for our continued community services.

Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada was established as a non-profit organization in 1989 by the university graduates of Srilankan origin from various universities to create a common forum to connect their common history to foster friendship and strengthen their relationship among them to share their knowledge, experience, expertise and connections, for the common benefit of all to settle down in the adopted land and to improve the profile of our community in the mainstream community of Canada. Initially, the main objectives of the association was to help foreign qualified graduates of different disciplines to get accreditation of their qualifications with various professional bodies and universities to gain professional memberships and pursue higher studies in their fields of education, through organizing workshops, seminars and networking. In addition to being a local forum in Canada for the betterment of its members fellow graduates, our association provided help and support for the Northern and Eastern Universities within it limited resources.

As the need for the initial objective diminished, the focus of our association changed more towards improving the educational and professional needs of our younger generation through organizing Job Fair for young graduates and career counselling (Guidance for Higher Studies) workshop for High School Students. We have been organizing career counselling workshop for more than a decade to provide guidance for higher studies for high school children, to help them make well informed decision about their higher education to achieve the best to suit their potential with good prospect, leading to a rewarding career and fulfilling future irrespective of their background and economic situation. This year our "Guidance For Higher Studies Workshop" was attended by more than three hundred students and parents and those attended appreciated the way it was professionally organized and the valuable information they received. This was facilitated by the continuing support we received from our younger generation of graduates who have recently passed out from the Canadian universities and working in various professions. They not only unselfishly shared their experience of the path of higher education they followed to achieve their qualification in their budding professional career and in fact they were an inspiration to the high school students who attended the work shop.

The vision of our mission has always been to improve the educational and professional profile of our community not only in the main stream life of Canada, but also to support our brothers and sisters to lead a better life back at home. We are operating mainly with an annual budget of less than ten thousand dollars, and could achieve so much over the years, in the life of many students, we could contribute more towards our community if we could receive support and participation from the community and our members. Over the past many years, participation of members has been steadily coming down and need to be revived to continue our community services. We are not discouraged by the lack of participation but encouraged by the fact we still continue serve our community with the support of hard core members, and call up on all our members to come back and join force with us to increase our membership to build our Association great and possibly as a think tank of our community.

Wish you all a happy and prosperous new year. Thank you

P.Balendran.B.Sc.Eng.,P.Eng.
Consulting Engineer.
President,ASGC.

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FROM THE DESK OF SECRETARY - Raj Thavartnasingham



Tamils from Sri Lanka started arriving in Canada as sponsored immigrants and refugees in the late 1980s after the eruption and escalation of ethnic violence in Sri Lanka. The Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada (ASGC) first began in 1989 as a non profit organization of persons living in Canada who had graduated from Sri Lankan universities. The aim of the ASGC was to help universities in Sri Lanka integrate with various organizations in Canada in order to have their degrees and diplomas recognized as equivalent to a particular level in Canada. ASGC was immensely successful in this effort and many graduates in various fields who have succeeded in holding higher positions in Canada forever owe gratitude to the ASGC for clearing a big hurdle that was prevalent at that time.

Having served a very useful purpose in settling graduates who migrated, the ASGC decided to expand its mandate. We realized that the high school students of our community here in Canada were in need of guidance and help in their career selection, as well as encouragement to perform volunteer service to the community. In addition, ASGC also wanted to provide a forum to graduates of Sri Lankan origin in Canada for the meeting, interacting & sharing of academic and professional expertise and experience. Finally,we wanted to develop ways to promote and aide in identifying concerns to the Sri Lankan community, and attempt to rectify them.

From the 1990s to the present, the ASGC has served the community in these various ways, the most important being conducting career counselling sessions for high school students for over thirteen years. The ASGC has held such sessions for the Toronto District School Board, Peel District School Board & York Region District School Board. The most recentone held in November 2013 for the YRDSB attracted over 250 students and parents. The series of workshops involves bringing successful recent graduates who are currently working to interact with high school students so that the students may ask questions and receive information about following a career path. Over the past many years over 4,500students and parents have benefitted from these sessions-some attendees have even graduated and come back to give their input to the new students.

The ASGC also has a mentorship program to render the community all possible assistance to gain access to professions that suit their education and experience. The ASGC has built up a list of volunteers who are currently employed senior professionals and have many years of work experience in Canada. The guidance includes, but is not limited to, recommendation of suitable part time courses for updating credentials, preparation of job application documents, a review of the procedures involved in getting membership with the appropriate professional body, connecting to a network of professionals, continuously monitoring the graduate's success and modifying the strategy until the mentee gets a suitable job in the specific profession.

Within our broader mandate of providing for the Tamil Canadian community, ASGC continues to be mindful of the situation in Sri Lanka affecting the Tamils, and from time to time has brought this to the attention of the Canadian Government. The Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada has had a positive impact on the lives of thousands of Sri Lankans in Canada over the course of the last twenty four years and we will continue to do so in the future. All the above would not have been possible without the individuals who against all odds started the Association in 1989. This was then followed by numerous individuals who helped with the growth of the Association. We would not be in this position without the support and dedication of our past Executive Committees and volunteers. We salute you for your service!



Message from the Trustee

December 14, 2013

I would like to extend my greetings and well wishes to the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada (ASGC) and its members on your annual dinner and the releasing of the Focus Magazine for 2013.

I continue to have the pleasure of working with ASGC on a number of initiatives that directly benefit students and parents in the Tamil Canadian community. This includes their annual Career Counselling sessions which have been organized for the past thirteen years, seven of which have been held in the Markham area with the support of York Region District School Board. In addition to helping the next generation, the Association also provides an important forum for graduates of Sri Lankan origin who reside in Canada to network and share information.

The steady growth and its ability to collaborate with other organizations are directly correlated with the high level of commitment possessed by the executives and members of ASGC. I wish ASGC, its executives and members continued success and look forward to continuing to support the organization and its future initiatives.

Sincerely,

Juanita Nathan
Trustee - Markham Ward 7 & 8
York Region District School Board

House of Commons



Rathika Sitsabaiesan
Member of Parliament for Scarborough-Rouge River

14 December 2013

A Personal Message from MP Rathika Sitsabaiesan

Dear Friends,

I would like to extend my sincere greetings to the attendees of the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada's annual Dinner and Dance.

The Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada (ASGC) is an organization that is committed to providing academic and professional assistance to many individuals across our community. The ASGC has focused on the educational growth of the youth in the Sri Lankan community by providing services like career counseling for graduating high school students. In addition, ASGC has been proven to be a reliable organization in our community over the past decades and continues to advocate for academic excellences for our youth.

I would like to genuinely thank the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada for their dedication to the Sri Lankan community and I would like to congratulate everyone who has contributed to the success of this organization.

Sincerely,

R. Sitsabaiesan MP

Rathika Sitsabaiesan, Member of Parliament

Scarborough-Rouge River

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Rathika.Sitsabaiesan@parl.gc.ca





MARKHAM

Frank Scarpitti
Mayor

December 14, 2013

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

On behalf of Members of Council and the City of Markham, I am pleased to extend a warm and sincere welcome to all those attending the 2013 Annual Dinner and Dance hosted by the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada in support of your career counselling sessions.

In Markham, we welcome people from all over the world to make their home in our city. We are proud to be recognized as Canada's most diverse city and take every occasion to celebrate the many cultures and traditions from across our community.

The Association of Sir Lankan Graduates of Canada is to be commended for working with the York District School Board and former graduates to present educational information sessions to assist students of Sri Lankan heritage with career choices, post-secondary school selections and scholarship and grant applications. When we work together, we create a better future for all.

As Mayor, I am proud of your efforts and I am delighted to have this opportunity to extend my best wishes for most enjoyable and successful evening.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Scarpitti

Frank Scarpitti
Mayor



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MARKHAM



Logan Kanapathi
Councillor, Ward 7

December 14, 2013

MESSAGE FROM MARKHAM

I would like to congratulate the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada (ASGC) for their tremendous and very valuable support to the community and extend my best wishes to everyone attending their Dinner Dance on December 14, 2013.

Grass roots organizations are vital for engaging communities in productive activities to improve the quality of life. ASGC has been playing that role very well for more than two decades now! I truly appreciate the members of ASGC for dedicating their valuable time in sharing academic and professional expertise and experience. I have first hand witnessed the highly successful career counselling workshops you provide for the youth especially the high school children. As such, I would like to thank the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada for creating these important outlets for our youth to obtain direction and network to succeed in their career goals.

As Councillor, I am very proud of your efforts in sharing knowledge and assisting young people with their career dreams. I wish you all the best for your future endeavours, and look forward to seeing your organization grow and flourish in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Logan Kanapathi
Councillor – City of Markham

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York Region
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

THE EDUCATION CENTRE

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[illegible]
Tel: [illegible]
Automated 905.7270022 895.7227 722.6255 416.969.7170

Fax: 905.727193[illegible]
Website: www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca

December 14, 2013

Greetings on Behalf of the York Region District School Board

On behalf of the York Region District School Board, I would like to offer my best wishes to the participants and organizers of the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada annual dinner and dance.

I would also like to recognize and express appreciation for the work of the association in supporting the career counseling and success of young people across York Region.

We are fortunate to live and work in one of the most diverse areas of Canada. This rich composition also makes our region one of the most vibrant communities in the country.

Our Board respects and celebrates the diversity reflected throughout our schools, workplaces and communities and is deeply committed to the principles of equity and inclusivity in all of our programs and practices.

Congratulations and best wishes to everyone who played a role in supporting our youth and in the annual dinner and dance event. Your efforts are greatly respected and appreciated.

Ken Thurston
Director of Education
York Region District School Board


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GUIDANCE FOR HIGER STUDIES WORKSHOP FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
MARKHAM 2012 & 2013
Compiled by Dr. V. Mannivannan (ASGC)



The annual Guidance for Higher Studies workshops for High School Students organized by the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada (ASGC) in partnership with the York Region District School Board (YRDSB), Canadian Tamil Alumni Association (CTAA), Canadian Tamil Medical Association (CTMA) and the Sri Lankan Accountants Association (SAAC) were held on Saturday November 3, 2012 and November 9, 2013 to promote higher education among Tamil youths. These extremely useful events for high school students and their parents were conducted from 10 am till 4 pm at Middlefield Collegiate Institute. These workshops were designed to serve as a forum for dissemination of information, exchange of ideas, and sharing of academic and professional experiences and to provide invaluable guidance to students and parents. The moderators and the panelist were selected on the basis of their success in their chosen profession and their ability to relate to youth. As usual, ASGC conducted the event free of charge and provided free lunch to students and parents who attended the workshops. It was estimated that more than 250 students and parents attended at each of these events.

The plenary session of the workshops started with the welcome speech by the ASGC President. Following the welcome speech, representatives of YRDSB expressed their happiness in supporting such excellent workshops. Thereafter inspirational keynote address was made by Dr. Amar Amarasingam (York University) at the last year's workshop and by Mr. Umesh valipuram (Corporate Development, Affiliated Managers Group) at this year's workshop. After the Plenary session, students participated in the two sessions of concurrent meetings of four groups viz. Health & Life Sciences, Engineering and Applied Sciences, Creative Arts and Social & Business Studies. Each field of study was addressed by 8 to 10 guest speakers. The students were able to ask questions and the discussions took place in an informal and friendly atmosphere. The list of presenters at the student sessions at the both events are given in the following pages. While students were participating at their sessions, parents were provided opportunities to discuss the issues related to them with a panel of speakers.

PARENTS' SESSION PANELIST

Chairperson: Mrs. Suganja Sinnathamby (ASGC and Maple HS, YRDSB)

November 2012	November 2013
Ms. Initha Subramaniam (Teacher Community Liaison, YRDSB)	Ms. Initha Subramaniam (Teacher Community Liaison, YRDSB)
Mr. Kandeepan Ganeshalingam (Vice-Principal, Milliken Mills HS, YRDSB)	Ms. Janani Pathy (Vice-Principal, Middilefield Collegiate)
Dr. Rajesh Logan & Dr. Santhakumar (CTMA)	Dr. Sanjeevan MRCS, FRCS (Head & Neck Surgeon, Clinical Lecturer U of Toronto)
Mr. Pon Sritharan & Mr. Thava Rajaratnam (SAAC)	Dr. Theivendirarajah & Dr. Balasunderam (ASGC)

WORKSHOP FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS....CONTD....

Workshop Speakers (for students) - November 2012

Health & Life Sciences	Engineering Sciences	Physical Sciences & Creative Arts	Business & Social Studies
Medical Doctor, Nurse, Chiropractor, Physiotherapist, Optometry, Nutritionist, Occupational therapist	Computer, Civil, Chemical, Electrical, Enviornmental engineering	Chemist, Physicist, Pharmaceutical, Technology, Computer animation, Graphic design, Photography	Communication, Law, Accountancy, Finance, Actuary, Social Work
Moderator Sandra Sabaratnam BHSc (Global Village Consulting)	Moderator Thiva Kulasingam BMath (Rogers)	Moderator Vaitheki Tharmaratnam BSc BEd (Accenture)	Moderator Harindra Sebastian FSA,FCIA, MBA (Towers Perrin)
PRESENTERS			
Sinthula Wijeyakulasingam BSc (Medical Student, U of Toronto)	Nirogini Nalliah BASc, EIT (Environmental Engineering)	Nirusha Thavarajah PhD, LLM (U of T)	Prashanth Srichandran BA(Hons) (City of Markham)
Thevaki Kulendran BA, BASc, RD (Queen Square Family Team)	Suthagar Sivapalan	Dharshi Varapragasam BSc, BEd (Peel DSB)	Roshan Thiru HBA, MBA Dip. Acc. (Manulife Asset Management)
Dr. Dharani Thevakumaran (Family medicine Residency, McMaster)	Dharminie Logarajah BASc (Chemical Engineering)	Rathi Paramasamy BSc, Post Grad Certi., in Pharma QC&QA, (MBA/TECH) (Devk Pharma Inc. North American Institute of Pharmaceutical Industry)	Kumaran Nadesan BA(Hons) (Correctional Serv., Gov. of Ontario)
Dr. Mathangi Arun BSc, MSc, OD (Boniface Park Medical Centre)	Stephen Jeeva (Computer Engineering)	Nive Thambithurai HBA (U of Toronto, Scarborough)	Jana Loganathan HBSc, LLB (SNC - Lavalin Inc.)
Laxee Nithiyanathan BSc, MSc (St. Joseph Health Centre)	Aravindan Shanmugarajah (Engineering)	Ara Ehamparam BSc, MBA (Collective Point of Sale Solutions)	Thulasi ThedchanamoorthyBAS,CGA (CDS Limited)
Goushala Sittampalam RN, BScN (St. Michael's Hospital)	Myooran (Minning Industries)	Mathusha Senthilmurugan BA (The Walt Disney Company)	Senthooran Punithavel HBA, OTL (The Cooperators)
Dr. Amal Sivapathasutharam BSc,DC (Dynamic Health & Injury Clinic)	Sarujan Kanapathipillai BASc (Electrical Engineer, CGI)	Theebak Sothilingam (Morneau Shepell)	Dila Donbosco BBA, CA (Kanish & Partners)
Uma Sebastiampillai (Trillium Health Centre)			Thuvarakan Thayaparan BBA, CMA (Senior Financial Analyst, Sears)
Nala Sriharan RN, BScN, CDE (Mississauga Halton Diabetes Regional Coordination Centre)			

WORKSHOP FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS....CONTD....

Workshop Speakers (for students) - November 2013

Health & Life Sciences	Engineering & Physical Sciences	Creative Arts & Entrepreneurship	Business & Social Studies
Moderator Sharmila Sathiasothy, HBSc, MSc (Research Tech. at Public Health Ontario)	Moderator Sukeevan Kaillayapathy, BSc (System Analyst at Brock Solutions)	Moderator Vijay Setlur, BAA, MBA, (Adjunct Marketing Professor at Schulich School of Business, York University)	Moderator Ashok Srithavanathan, CPA, CA, BBA (Manager, Financial Advisory Services at BDO Canada LLP)
PRESENTERS			
Dr. Shanthy S. Brown, BSc, OD (Optometrist)	Ruban Patkunam, BEng (Principal Consultant at Systemware Innovation)	Vipoositha Gnanenthra, HBSc (Freelance Photographer at Ovyan Photography)	Dr. Amarnath Amarasingam (York University)
Poobica Kumaran, RN, BScN (Registered Nurse at Markham Stouffville Hospital)	Dr. S. Gnaneshan (Asst. Professor, U of T)	Ramya Jegatheesan, HBA, MJ (Documentary Filmmaker, Photographer, Writer)	Deepa Balachandran, LLB (Rusonik, O'Connor, Robbins, Ross, Gorham & Angelini, LLP)
Preethy Prasad, HBSc (Ph. D. Candidate, Faculty of Pharmacy at U of T)	Kobihan Karunakaran (Civil Eng. Student, U of Waterloo)	Anoshinie Muhundarajah (Professionally Trained Dancer, Assistant Director and Choreographer at Broken Dance Performing Arts)	Niro Ganesanathan, BASc, MBA, (Associate, Financial Markets Rotation Program at National Bank of Canada)
Dr. Sanjeevan, MRCS, FRCS (Otolaryngologist & Head/Neck Surgeon, Clinical Lecturer at U of T)	Tharshika Karunanithi, HBSc (QC Dosage Chemist at Apotex Inc.)	Tasha Nathan, BA (Event Coordinator at Speakers Gold)	Sujee Jeganathan, BComm , MBA, CISA (President at The CapbleShoppe Inc.)
Sinthujaa Sivanesan, HBSc, CCRA, CCRP (Clinical Research Coordinator at INC Research)	Nirogini Nalliah, BASc, EIT (Environmental Engineering)	Kirthiga Rajanayagam (4^{th} Year Fashion Communication Student at Ryerson University)	Jayanthia Kirishanthan, BAS (Canada Revenue Agency)
Anushi Sivarajah, HBSc (Doctor of Medicine Candidate at U of T)	Sanjeevan Balasunderam, BASc (Computer Talk)	Varanan Sooriyamoorthy, BA (Producer/Director/Writer/Editor)	Magima Rajthiageswaran, BA, BEd (Maple HS, YRDSB)
Dr. Harshini Sriskanda (Pediatrics, Western University)	Gartheepan Rasaratnam, BASc (Systems Design Engineering)	Nayani Thiyagarajah, Bjourn (Co-Creator/Exec Producer at Refuge Productions)	Piravi Srikanthan, BComm (Price Waterhouse Coopers)
Meera Srikanthan, HBSc (Faculty of Pharmacy at U of T)	Dhaksayan Shanmuganayagam, HBSc, PMP (Senior Solutions Architect at Toronto Transit Commission)	Senthil Vinu (Producer, Writer & Director)	Dushahi Sribavan, BA, LLL, JD (Barrister/Solicitor and Entrepreneur at Dushahi Sribavan Law Professional Corporation)
Russanthy Velummailum, HBSc, MSc (MPH Candidate at U of T)	Janani Sivarajah, HBSc, MFC (Ph.D. Candidate, Forestry Conservation at U of T, Self-Employed Consultant)		Vaitheki Tharmaratnam, BSc, BEd (Capeo Consulting)
Dr. Arun Rajasekaran BSC, DDS, MS, FRCD(C) (Orthodontics, Markham)	Rilan Srikanthan, BASc, EIT (Design Engineer at Hydro One)		Nive Vincent, HBSc, BEd (Discovery PS, YRDSB)
Sivagowry Nadarajah BSc, MRT(R) (Radiology Technologist, St. Michael's Hospital)	Anoojan Vijayasri, BASc (Software Engineer at Cisco Systems)		Sunitha Subramaniam, BA Kinesiology (ABA Therapist)

WORKSHOP FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS....CONTD....

The high school students were able to receive vital information about the selection of courses and the career paths of different professions from the young graduates in the Tamil community. Similarly parents collected very valuable information from a panel of speakers who have been involved with parent-school-community issues.

Finally all the students and parents gathered in the main auditorium for summary and recap of the discussions. The moderators of each group presented a summary of the items discussed in their sessions. The panel of presenters and moderators answered the questions raised by the participants. Towards the end certificates were presented by ASGC to the presenters and to the volunteers in appreciation of their contribution. The workshop ended with a vote of thanks delivered by the secretary of ASGC. The students and parents really appreciated having the opportunity to get presenter's advice and to listen to their experiences.

COMMENTS FROM THE PANELIST

The high school workshop hosted by the ASGC turned out to be a great success this year. It was inspiring to hear about the career success stories of many young professionals within the Tamil community and to see a panel of speakers representing several different career streams from science and engineering to media and fashion. The knowledge and advice that was given to students was invaluable and motivating. A special thanks to the organizers of ASGC for their dedication and commitment to helping Tamil students receive the resources they need to make well informed decisions about their education and career.

Sharmila

It was pleasure to be a panellist at the career guidance workshop for the high school students. I had a great time with some of the bright and enthusiastic young minds; High school kids ready to embark on a career journey and on the verge of making an important decision in their life. I hope I inspired some of them by sharing my thoughts and vision in my field. The organizers were prudent that the diversity and changing dynamics in modern career prospects were addressed not just focusing on conventional choices. It was a fantastic day; I met many professionals of Tamil heritage.

Dr.N.Shanjeevan

"I have been volunteering as a panel speaker for the annual career workshop for the past 3 years held by ASGC. Having the opportunity to speak in the Engineering and Business panels, has enabled me to provide words of wisdom for the next generation. Children in this day and age are vibrant and forthcoming about their goals in life. They know what they want and have done their homework. It is also great to connect with other accomplished young professionals in the Tamil community. I hope to be a part of the panel discussion next year, and wish ASGC continued successes."

Vaitheki Tharmaratnam

COMMENTS FROM THE PANELIST.... CONTD....

ASGC has established an invaluable platform for youth to connect with professionals from various disciplines. The annual Career Fair provides an opportunity for high school students to unleash their anxiety related to entering college/university and helps them contemplate/set their career path with confidence. The professionals and the students were enthusiastic about engaging in a dialogue about university applications and expectations of the various professions. I would like to thank ASGC for the opportunity to be a panel speaker and moderator at the Career Fair. It was a great honour to be part of an event that contributes to the success of the future generations. I would like to congratulate the board of directors, organizers and volunteers on the marvellous work done so far. I wish the ASGC team a great success for many more years to come. Good luck!!

Sukeev Kailayapathy

"It was an honour to have been part of this year's annual Guidance for Higher Studies Workshop. In addition to having the opportunity to work with the dedicated team of organizers from the ASGC, I was fortunate enough to experience the engagement of both speakers and students first hand, in my role as a moderator. I was very pleased to see the commitment of the high caliber emerging professionals in our community who volunteered their valuable time to this worthy endeavor, and I was equally impressed by the inquisitive young students who took full advantage of the guidance offered by the speakers. I strongly believe this workshop provides an invaluable service to our community, and it was truly a rewarding experience to have been part of it."

Ashok Srithavanathan

The workshop was a great opportunity for students to gain insight on different career pathways that are out there, and to always think outside the box! It was informative for both parents and students so that they can make an informed decision together.

Meera Srikanthan

My experience as a volunteer at the annual career counseling workshop has been rewarding and humbling, providing me with the opportunity to share my insight with students and parents on my experience as an Ontario high school and university graduate. I provided insight on university admissions and applications, housing and residences, financial aid and other related inquiries by students and parents. The workshop is designed to encourage participants to ask questions in an encouraging and open environment. The graduates are educated in their field of study and honest in their responses. Overall, the workshop was a success and I look forward to participating in it next year.

Nirogini Nalliah

CAREER COUNSELING WORKSHOP















CAREER COUNSELING WORKSHOP - 2013



CAREER COUNSELLING WORKSHOP FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS - NOVEMBER 2013

Part of the discussion at the Parents session



On Saturday, November 9, 2013, ASGC hosted its annual Career Fair at Middlefield C.I. Many professionals from a variety of career areas were present to share their experiences with high schools students. Parents also had an opportunity to ask questions about how to support their children in making decisions about career options. Listed below are some questions that were asked by parents:

What can I do to help my child decide on a career?

It is important for students to base decisions about career pathways based on their interests and academic achievement. In Science alone, there are so many different options other than medicine and engineering to pursue, such as kinesiology, biochemistry, marine biology, pharmacology, genetics, environmental science, psychology etc.

Students can use online career inventories to explore careers which match their interests such as the one found on the following website: http://www.yrdsb.ca/students.
Information about career pathways can also be gathered on the Ontario School Counsellors' Association website: www.osca.ca.

It is also helpful for students to have the opportunity to gain some firsthand experience in a career area which interests them. They can get this experience through volunteer work, summer jobs, internships or through their school's Co-operative Education program.

Should my child pursue an apprenticeship or go to college or university?

It is important for parents to discuss with their children the ways in which they enjoy learning.

Those who like to learn "on-the-job" may want to explore a career in one of the trades, through an apprenticeship program. Examples include automotive service technician, hairstylist, plumber, tool & die maker, etc. Apprenticeships can take between 2 - 5 years to complete. Information about Ontario's youth apprenticeship program can be found at: http://oyap.com.

When deciding on the option between college or university, it is important to explore the different programs and the academic pre-requisites required by the colleges and universities. Information on Ontario's college programs can be found at: http://www.ontariocolleges.ca. A guide to Ontario's universities can be found at: http://www.electronicinfo.ca.

There are also joint programs which allow students to begin a program at a college (like Seneca College) and complete a degree at a university (like York University). Information about joint programs can be found on individual college websites.

Parents are encouraged to visit college and university campuses during their Open House days and/or to attend the annual College/University fair held in the Fall at the Metro Convention Centre. The answers to many questions can be answered by college/university representatives at these events.

CAREER COUNSELING WORKSHOP CONTD....

How can I enrol my child in a "Gifted" program?

Giftedness is defined as "an unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated." - Ministry of Education. In York Region, students are identified by a regional screening process in Grade 3. Students who meet the screening criteria receive an individual psychological assessment and then are identified as a Gifted student through an IPRC process and will also received support from the school's Special Education Resource Teacher

What is the difference between IB and AP?

Both IB (International Baccalaureate) and AP (Advanced Placement) are programs that provide enrichment for students in high school. Students do not have to be identified as "gifted" to enroll in these programs. Students who are highly motivated and seeking intellectually challenges might benefit from an IB or AP program. If a student is considering studying abroad, he/she could consider enrolling in an IB program. Those who would like to study in the United States could consider taking the AP program. Students who excel in the IB and AP exams in Grade 12 may be exempted from first year university programs at certain institutions. More information about IB can be found at: http://www.ibo.org/ and details about the AP program can be found at: http://apcanada.collegeboard.org/

What types of post-secondary scholarships are available for my child?

Post-secondary scholarships are awarded based on either community work, academic achievement or a combination of both categories. It is advisable for students to begin drafting their scholarship application during the summer prior to their Grade 12 year to ensure that sufficient time is spent on these competitive applications. Information about scholarships can be found at the following websites: www.studentawards.com and www.scholarshipscanada.com

Parent Involvement

Schools are eager to have parents as partners in education. Parents do not need to wait for parent-teacher interviews to contact the classroom or subject teachers. Teachers are happy to meet with parents at any time during the school year through scheduled appointments. Parents who would like to share their opinions about decisions made by the school are invited to join the School/Parent Council. Information to support parents is also available on the People for Education website: http://www.peopleforeducation.ca/. Tip sheets for parents are available in Tamil on this website. Parents are strongly encouraged to get involved in their child's education whether the child is in elementary or secondary school. Research indicates that students who perform well at school are the ones that have caring, supportive and actively involved parents!

Janani Pathy
Vice Principal
York Region District School Board

ONTARIO VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARDS 2013



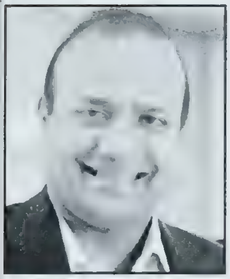


Congratulation to the following three ASGC members and a youth volunteer who were recognized and presented with Ontario volunteer service awards in 2013:

NEL KETHARANATHAN FOR 15 YEARS,
RAJ THAVARATNASINGHAM FOR 10 YEARS,
HARENDRA SEBASTIAN FOR 5 YEARS AND
SHANJITH YASOTHARAN FOR OVER 2 YEARS AS YOUTH VOLUNTEER

CAREER COUNSELLING WORKSHOP FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS NOVEMBER 2013

Key Note Address by Umesh Vallipuram



Good morning ladies, gentlemen and to all the youthful and ambitious high-schoolers who are here today. I am really excited for you all, as you are starting the journey of discovering what the future holds for you. A big thank you for the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada for successfully hosting this career work shop year after year dating back to the 1990's, and the 40 or so youth full looking panelist and moderators who are here today to share their experience and insights. Let's give them all a big round of applause.

Let me first tell you that I am an old hack at this very event. In the late 1990's I was invited for several years to be a panelist, then got the promotion to be a moderator, and then the invitation stopped all together 6 or 8 years ago...probably I was too old for this. So I am really glad and humbled to be invited back to give the keynote address. It may be a good sign that I've aged well and on the right career track.

I was doing some research on what I was going to say, and I came across an interesting survey about keynote speeches to high school students. I think it was done by Toast Masters International. Per the survey, at least 90% of the students couldn't remember the message of the keynote speaker one month following the event, 94% couldn't remember who the speaker was 6 months after the event, and it gets better, 98% of them couldn't remember the speaker after a year.

On that positive note, let me share with you today three things that I value and cherish the most, and has made me the man that I am today. I am going to doing something different later so that at least you can remember one of these key messages for more than one month. I am not asking for much from you all.

Key Message #1 - Overcoming the Fear of Failure

For me, the life experience that stands out the most is overcoming the fear of failure, and this I truly believe was a turning point in my life. I came to Canada when I was 14. I was a shy and introverted kid, hardly had friends and mostly kept to myself. To make matters worse, I had severe Acme...yes every teenager's nightmare. Being new to Canada, I was afraid to speak to people because of the fear of rejection. I confided with my dad how miserable I felt. Lucky for me, I had a close relationship with my parents. My Father's advice to me was "Can you see Yourself living like this the rest of your life. If the answer is no, do something that is completely out of your comfort zone."

So I took this to heart and started exploring. One day I saw this posting in our high school. It said "Team in dire need of Ruby players, no experience required, will give training". Well, I said that was interesting and worth giving it a shot as I never played ruby before. I showed up for practice. I was this scrawny tall kid, and every player there was at least 30 pounds heavier than me. To my surprise, I made the team....well as a water boy, something I am not so proud to admit. One day our rugby team was playing Glebe High School. It was a rainy and foggy day. There were so many injuries on both sides. We were leading by four points and I was the last player on the bench.

WORKSHOP FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS....CONTD....

Another of our player was injured. My heart started to pound. My coach said that I have to go in. His advice to me was, stay calm, if the ball comes to you, don't do anything fancy, just kick it away. Well low and behold, the ball came to me. I was so nervous, my legs were shaking. Instead of kicking the ball forward, I kick it backwards high…high in the sky. Well, the opposition team caught the ball and scored a try and they ended up winning that game.

As you can imagine, I was devastated and humiliated, and just ran off the field after the game. I didn't sleep all night. We had team practice the next day. I debated about quitting Ruby all together. But something in me that said "don't be a quitter". I showed up for practice one hour early so I didn't have to face everyone at the same time. The coach showed up 30 minutes later, and then teammates came one by one shortly after. Nobody said anything about game the day before. It was a mystery for me. At the end of practice, all the teammates came together and lifted me up and sang the school's Rugby cheer. Every one of them gave me a hug and said don't worry about the loss, it was only a game. We are glad to see that you are not a quitter and you are a real teammate. That gave me a huge… huge boost of confidence. From there on I went on to play ruby regularly at school and then also played rugby for my university.

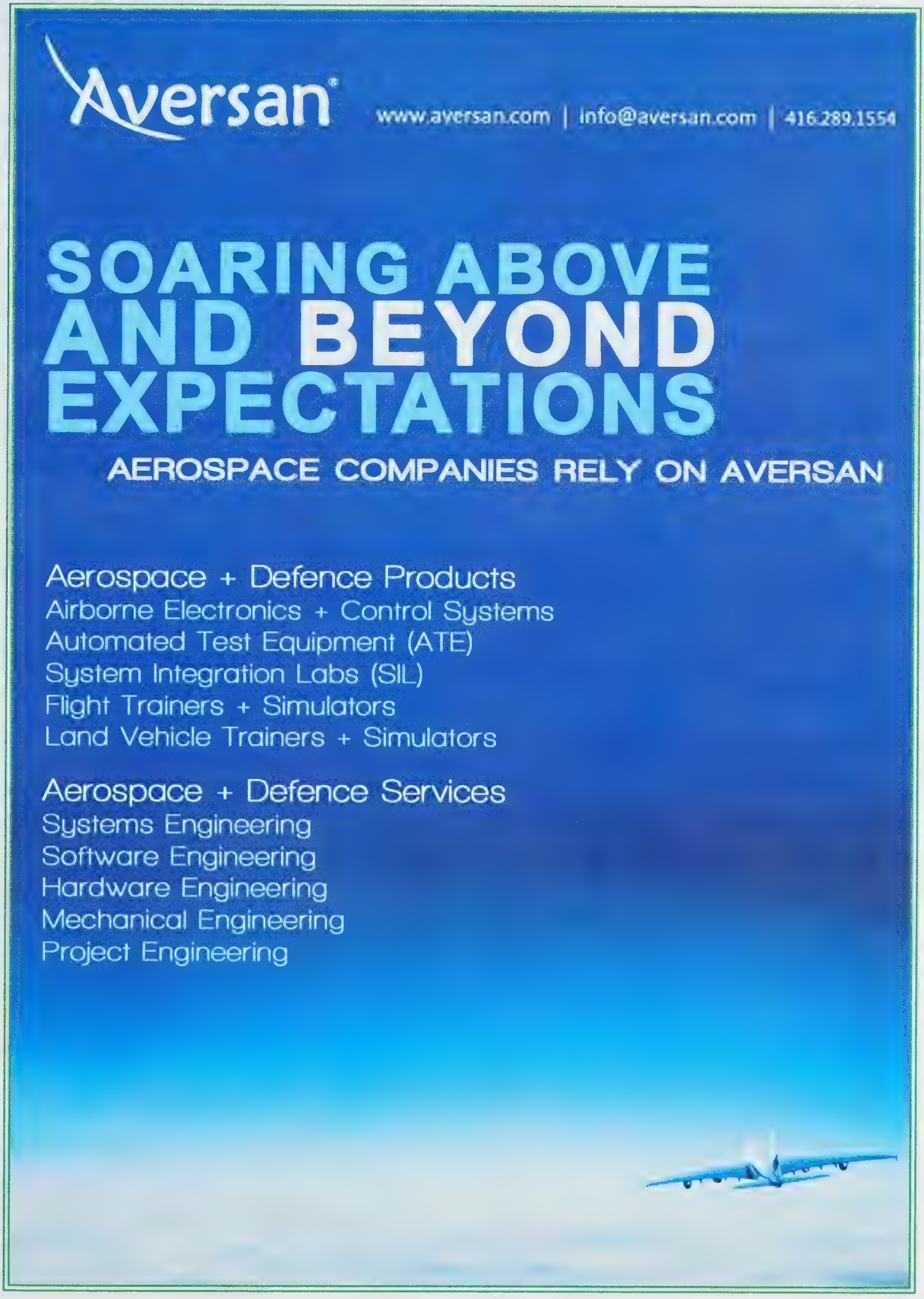
This experience has been imprinted in me forever and since that time it has given me the confidence not to fear about failure. In my work life, when I entered the Investment Banking field in the late 1990's, there were hardly any visible minorities in this field at that time. Starting out, I had this fear of whether do I belong in this field, and am I going to be a failure? However, I managed to thrive in this field for the last 15 years because of my experience in high school that had given me the confidence that don't be afraid to fail.

So, I told you that I am going to do something different….well this is it…..

I want all the high school students to stand up to take an oath - raise your hands please and say these words after me "I solemnly swear, I am going to overcome, my fear of failure, by doing something, I've been terrified of doing" That's great, now your challenge is to do something by next week, it could be as simple as standing in front of people and doing a speech, asking a question in class, joining a new club…anything that is out of your comfort zone and keep building on it. I guarantee you, it will feel great!

Key Message #2 - Have unrelenting determination to succeed

The second principal that has helped governed my life is the unrelenting determination to succeed. As I'd mentioned earlier, I came to Canada when I was 14. Which meant my father giving up his career in civil service and my parents give up all their comforts in life to come to a new country, so that they can give my brother and me a better future? My father couldn't find any office job and they were running out of money. To make ends meet he worked as a security guard and my mother, who had never worked in her life, as a seamstress. I saw them labour through those hardship for many years and made a resolution to myself that for all the sacrifices they've made, I am ever so determined to make them proud.


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WORKSHOP FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS....CONTD....

Now that I am a father, looking back there were days that I thought my parents were nuts…felt like they were nagging me all the time to study and to not watch TV. But remember, your parents have made a lot of sacrifices and have your interest at heart. You are their pride and joy, so be determined to make them proud.

Based on my life experience, I can tell you that talent alone will not make you successful. I know of a lot of smart people who have failed to live up to their promise in their careers. If you have that dream, if you have that passion, you don't stop fighting for it until you've got it. You never, EVER take no as a final answer. You find people who will help you get there. You have to take on challenges outside your comfort zone, because hard work and determination will always win.

Key Message #3 - Giving back to the Community

The third and final principal is giving back to the community. We all have busy lives and it very hard to make time to volunteer for good causes given all the conflicting priorities in our lives. Today's career forum cannot be made possible if not for the army of volunteers who are passionate about helping you all have a better future. Individuals like current president Mr.Pon Balendran, and long-time committee members like Dr.V. Manivanan, Mr. Raj Thavaratnasignam, Dr.K. Theivendirarajah and Mr.C. Ramanathan….and the next generation of leaders who have taken on the task of organizing this years' event including Thiva Kulasingam and Suganja Sinnathamby. These individuals have sacrificed their leisure and family time for your benefit.

One initiative that I am passionate about is building leadership and innovation amongst our youth. With that in mind, I co-founded Centre for Leadership and Innovation more than 2 years ago along with Mr. Kumar Ratnam and Mr. Sivan Ilangko. Our goal for the Youth Leadership Program is to provide an inspiring and supporting environment that will help youth become leaders and leverage their full potential to bring about innovative change.

To start off, our primary focus has been on public speaking and team-building skills, something the current school curriculum don't offer enough. We have over 50 kids in this program, and a number of them are here today.

For volunteers like Kumar, Ilangko and I, it is so rewarding to see the deference this program is making in these kids. Kids who were shy and introverted are blossoming into confident public speakers. There is no better feeling like that…nothing can beat it! You can find out more information on this program at www.cflicanada.com.

Conclusion

That brings to an end my speech. In concluding, all I am asking you is to remember at least one of these three things:
1) Failure is part of success; don't be afraid of it;
2) Hard work and determination will always win; and
3) Give back to your community.

Wishing you all the very best!

SHORT-TERM VS. LONG-TERM INVESTMENTS: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

At various times, many people may feel frustrated by the performance of their investments. For example, they expect growth, and they don't get it - or they think the value of their investment won't fluctuate much, but it does. However, some of this frustration might be alleviated if investors were more familiar with the nature of their investment vehicles. Specifically, it's important to keep in mind the difference between long-term and short-term investments.

What defines long-term and short-term investments? Long-term investments are those vehicles that you intend to hold for more than one year - in fact, you generally intend to hold them for several years. On the other hand, you usually hold short-term investments for one year or less.

You can find several key distinctions between short-term and long-term vehicles. Here are a few to consider:

They carry different expectations -
When you purchase an investment that you intend to keep for many years, you may be expecting the investment to increase in value so that you can eventually sell it for a profit. In addition, you may be looking for the investment to provide income. When you purchase a short-term vehicle, you are generally not expecting much in the way of a return or an increase in value. Typically, you purchase short-term investments for the relatively greater degree of principal protection they are designed to provide.

They meet different needs at different times of life -
You will have different investment needs at different times of your life. When you're young, and just starting out in your career, you may require a mix of long- and short-term investments. You might need the short-term ones to help pay for a down payment on a home, while the long-term ones could be used to help build resources for your retirement. But later in life, when you're either closing in on retirement, or you're already retired, you may have much less need for long-term vehicles, with a corresponding increase in your need for short-term investments.

They can satisfy different goals -
If you purchase investments that you intend to hold for the long term, you probably have a long-term goal in mind - such as building resources to help pay for a comfortable retirement or leaving a legacy. On the other hand, a short-term investment would be more appropriate if you know that you will need a certain amount of money at a certain time - perhaps to purchase a car or to fund a vacation.

They carry different risks -
All investments carry some type of risk. One of the biggest risks associated with long-term investments is volatility, the fluctuations in the financial markets that can cause investments to lose value. On the other hand, short-term investment vehicles may be subject to purchasing power risk - the risk that your investment's return will not keep up with inflation.

As an investor, you'll probably need a mix of long-term and short-term vehicles. By knowing the differences between these two categories, you should have a good idea of what to expect from your investments - and this knowledge can help you make those choices that are right for you.

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Member - Canadian Investor Protection Fund

REINVESTING DIVIDENDS CAN BE A SMART MOVE

As an investor, you'll eventually need to make all sorts of decisions - and some will be difficult. But there's one choice you can make that can be relatively easy: reinvesting stock dividends.

It's simple to reinvest dividends - you just need to sign up for a dividend reinvestment plan (DRIP). Once you do, you won't receive dividends directly as cash; instead, your dividends will be directly reinvested in the underlying equity. Be aware, though, that you may incur a fee when reinvesting dividends.

By doing some research, you can find companies that have not only consistently paid dividends year after year but also increased those dividend payments regularly. (Keep in mind that companies are not obligated to pay dividends and can reduce or discontinue them at any time.)

By reinvesting dividends, you may be able to realize some key benefits. First, you'll be building your share ownership, which can help you build wealth. No matter what the market is doing, adding shares can be beneficial - but may be especially valuable when the market is down. When share prices are low, reinvesting dividends - which don't typically fluctuate with share price - can help boost your investment reach further, simply because each reinvested dividend can buy more shares than at the previous higher share price.

Consider this: It took investors 25 years to recover from the Crash of 1929 if they did not reinvest their dividends - but it only took them 15 years to recover from the crash if they did reinvest dividends, according to Ned Davis Research. And we've seen the same phenomenon in more recent years, too. Since 1987, according to Ned Davis Research, we've had three major market corrections: Black Monday in 1987; the bursting of the dot-com bubble from 2000 to 2002; and the bursting of the subprime and credit bubbles in 2008. The S&P 500 rose following those market corrections. Investors who stayed invested during those corrections had the opportunity to participate in rising markets. Those investors participating in a dividend reinvestment plan may have been able to buy more shares at a lower price. Of course, past performance doesn't guarantee future results and the value of your stock shares can fluctuate. Performance is not guaranteed and you may lose principal.

While reinvesting your dividends clearly can be beneficial, you do have to be aware that, even if you aren't receiving the dividends as cash, you will be taxed on them. But the dividend tax rate remains quite favorable compared to general income tax rates.

While taxes are a consideration when investing, they should never be the driving factor. Consider also that investing in dividend-paying stocks does carry some risk. You may be able to reduce the impact of this possible volatility by sticking with quality stocks as part of a diversified portfolio.

As we've seen, reinvesting dividends can help you build your investment portfolio - so consider putting this technique to work in your investment strategy.

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CAREER COUNSELLING WORKSHOP FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS NOVEMBER 2012

Key Note Address by Amarnath Amarasingam

What High School Students and Parents Should Know about University

When I was first asked to deliver this keynote address, I wanted to say no. I haven't been a teenager for over 10 years. I'm going bald and blind. I hate going to the mall, and I don't go to tuition classes on the weekends. What do I know about the challenges of high school today? But, I said yes. And I said yes for one reason only: I teach university students. I've met the good students, the bad students, and the annoying students. I've also met the ones that I knew were much smarter than I was. And I wanted to provide you with a few tips on how you could be the good kind of student. I want to talk to those just starting high school first, and then I'll talk to the older students. Parents, I'll deal with you at the end.

First, for those starting out: When I asked some of my colleagues for advice about what I should tell you today about life in high school and life after high school, they told me to inspire you. They told me to tell you about my own struggles in high school, the things that I did, the things that I should've done, or failed to do. This is apparently important, so here goes: I worked full-time throughout much of my high school years. Not part-time. Full-time as a security guard, as a dish washer, and at call-centres. As a security guard, I worked night shifts three or four times a week. I would finish work at seven in the morning, drive directly to my first class, and then go home at 3pm to sleep. And then wake up and do it all over again. I know what many of you are thinking: "Who cares? I work a lot too." And that's true. Today, over 30 percent of 15 to 17 year olds work at part-time jobs throughout the school year. Not just during the summer.

This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it can be. Working can build your character, help you meet a diverse array of people, and allow you to have new experiences. But, spending 20 hours a week on something other than school can also be quite stressful. I was never able to admit as a teenager that I was overwhelmed, which I was. I was utterly exhausted, and my grades suffered big time. Admitting that you are overwhelmed can be difficult, but only you can know for sure. Be honest with yourself about your limitations and, more importantly, about your priorities.

Here's another secret about high school: at this point, you don't actually have to know what you want to do with the rest of your life. People will ask you this question often, they will try to pressure you in this and that direction, and make you feel like if you don't make a decision right away, you risk falling behind the pack. Here's the truth: there is no pack. There's no rush. The Coach Canada "success" bus isn't leaving for another six years at least. Grab a Gatorade and take a seat.

Another important part of high school (and feel free to elbow your parents as I say this): you will have boyfriends and girlfriends...and you will probably break up with all of them. Very few of you will get married to the person you are with in high school, even if you carved each other's names onto you locker and wrote "forever" under it.

WHAT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND PARENTS ..... CONTD....

Why am I talking about this? What does this have to do with jobs and career choices? I talk about it because the only thing that is going to be more stressful than classes and part-time jobs is negotiating relationships, and falling in and out of love. It's brutal. Painfully brutal. And here's a secret: your parents know this. They know it very well, and that's why they're scared. But, here's another secret: you will learn a lot from these failed relationships. You will learn a lot about yourself and your principles. You will learn a lot about regret, sadness, and loss. And most importantly, you'll learn how to simply be in a relationship. Practice makes perfect, and that applies to love and relationships as well.

While I've told you that it is a little early for you to know what you want to do with your life, it is of course never too early to begin thinking about it. In fact, I demand you start now. You're told all the time: find out what interests you and then find a way to make money doing it. The problem is: you don't really know what interests you yet. So, here's what you do: get off Facebook, and go volunteer at different places, try different jobs out, experiment with different stuff. If there's one thing I wish someone had told me when I was in high school, it is that. Don't expect to figure it out just by taking classes - schools and classes aren't really designed for that. I wasted a lot of time because I never really got out there to figure out what I wanted to do. It's not going to just appear out of thin air.

For example, I had a very inspiring World History teacher in high school. I was amazed by how much she knew, and how well she understood the world around us - the world I was still trying to figure out. I was determined to one day know as much as she did. So, I thought I wanted to be a high school teacher. It seemed obvious at the time. But, it was not until my second year at the University of Toronto, after I actually went and volunteered to help teach a high school class, that I realized "this isn't really a good fit for me." I deeply admire high school teachers and I wanted to love it. But I didn't really know, and I still don't really know, why it wasn't a good fit. But, it wasn't. But, here's the point: volunteering helped me realize early on what I didn't want to do. The lesson is simple: sometimes what you think you will love turns out to be very different when you actually try it. So, remember that you have a lot of time to figure it out, but the process doesn't involve just sitting around and waiting for light bulbs to go off. You have to experiment, you have to take risks, and try different things out.

Now, for the older students: you're almost in university. A year or two away. I remember it like it was yesterday: the annoying piles of paperwork, getting your transcripts together, and, most importantly, picking a major. Then you wait. Small envelope bad. Big envelope good. Having been a university student, a graduate student, and now teaching at a university, let me try to put this big, scary, thing called university into some perspective. You may have already heard this, but it's important to hear it again.

First, you will probably lose a lot of friends. Members of your high-school crew may disappear to various universities around the world, and you may promise to stay close, but you won't. You may "like" each other's pictures on Facebook, and see each other once every few months, but it's not going to be the same. At the very same time, some universities can be very isolating, and the environment itself - especially if you're living with your parents - can make it difficult to make friends. I talk about this first because it's usually the first "experience" of university for most people.

WHAT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND PARENTS ..... CONTD....

The second experience is the classroom. You used to walk into your high school class, of maybe 30 students, and say "Hi Mr. so and so", and he would also greet you by name, before sitting down. You also knew the names of most of your classmates. This is all about to change. In first year, depending on your major, you may be in a class with over 100 people. The professor doesn't know you - they have no way of remembering over 100 names. Because of this, developing personal relationships with your professors is extremely difficult. But, put that on your "to-do" list. And put it near the top. If you are going on to graduate school, law school, or medical school, you'll need strong reference letters from some of them. If they can talk about how they know you personally - about your enthusiasm in class and your extracurricular activities - it will be more powerful than a letter simply pointing out that you "got an A" in their class.

So, worst case scenario, you're isolated from friends, family, and teachers. What do you do? In order to establish some kind of social network, you should think about joining student associations and other campus groups at your university. Otherwise, and this is not true for everyone, you could become very cut off, and the university experience won't be pleasant. Don't just join these groups, but seek to establish yourself in leadership positions within these organizations. Not only will these extracurricular commitments help you establish a solid network of friends, they will give you very useful experience in administration, the organizing of events, negotiating disputes, and so on. For these reasons, they always look good on resumes.

So, what is expected of you in university? For the most part, the reading load and writing load is fairly manageable. But, you are, of course, expected to produce high quality work. I am amazed by how many students come to university incapable of writing a coherent essay, doing basic research, and sometimes not being able to understand what they are reading. This is a problem, and you should fix it in high school. Parents often send their kids to tuition classes to help them in chemistry or physics, but rarely think about reading and writing skills. Regardless of your major, whether it's in the natural sciences or social sciences, reading and writing are important skills - so make them a priority and make sure you're good at them.

University is also what you make of it. No one is going to hold your hand, and chase after you if you skip class or hand in late assignments. Nobody cares. That may sound harsh, but it's true. You are given an enormous amount of freedom and independence, and many students do not handle it very well. Some students show up to the first few of my classes, and when they realize I don't take attendance, they disappear. I may not see them again until the final exam. This is not the end of the world. There are students who never come to class and do exceptionally well. There are also students who come to every class and still fail. Again, knowing yourself and how you learn and consume information is important.

Something else to keep in mind (and your parents may not be happy to hear it): you don't have to go to university, and if you do, you don't have to go through it like everybody else did. There are colleges, film schools, and other kinds of technical training that may spark your interest. Part of figuring out what you want to do is to go beyond the university system as well. And I say that as someone who makes a living in the university system, and is more than happy to take your money. If you do end up in university, don't be scared to take your time. There is a huge rumor out there that you have to finish university in four years. It's not true. Do exchange programs.

WHAT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND PARENTS ..... CONTD....

Live in Paris or Rome for a summer, learn a new language, or simply travel and see the world. Volunteer for a human rights organization or a charity of some kind overseas. And this is not just for political science and sociology majors. Medical schools and law schools crave people with well-rounded personalities who have interesting stories to tell. Leave the comfort and security of your parents' home, and see the world. You may accidentally encounter your passion, and it could change your life.

When I started university in 2001, it was risky enough to tell my parents that I wanted to study history and political science. Now, even in our own community, this is starting to change, and different avenues are opening up and starting to become more accepted. So, take advantage of it. I did much of my graduate research in religion and politics, and my parents had no idea what that was, or why I cared about it, or why anyone would consider that a career. So, there is a simple take home message: don't just say you don't know what interests you yet. Get interested in finding out. And then put all your energy and creativity behind it.

One thing I would like to mention briefly: along with being ready academically, university demands that you have a lot of self-care skills as well. These includes things like, being able to shop for groceries, do laundry, make appointments for yourself, and figure out how to get to new places on a bus system that you're not familiar with. In many communities, including our own, children are often quite catered to, and coddled, and taken care of to such an extent that many eighteen-year-olds have never done their own laundry before. If this is you, it is a good time to figure out how to wash your dirty drawers by yourself.

And this brings me to the parents: I know sometimes your teenage children just want you to keep your mouth closed and your wallets open. It's a scary time. You remember when you were their age. You wish they would avoid all the bad things you did, and do all the good things that you did even better. But, unfortunately, that's not how the world works. Sadly, I have no real words of comfort for you. Your son or daughter's high school years are not going to be fun for you. Your blood pressure will go up. You will find yourself on the phone at two in the morning, trying to call them. No one will answer. Then they will walk in the door at 3am and get mad at you for asking where they were and what they were doing.

As for their studies: The biggest mistake parents make, and the cause of much of their anger and anxiety, is the insistence that your dreams should be ours as well. Be open to the fact that your child will not figure it out right away. They don't have to. How were your high school years? What was your university experience like? Whatever it is and however it was like, your child's won't be the same. You may recognize in your son or daughter the same desire for meaning and purpose that you had, but the details will be very different. Be there to listen and learn, and don't be disappointed if your child does not walk down the path you have set out for them. Trust them. They do want to make you proud, but they want to be proud of themselves also.

But, I'm not going to lie. It's going to be tough, but you have to let them take some risks, give them a bit of freedom, and trust that they will eventually figure it out. I know doing their laundry for them and mixing their puttu and muttai into little balls is how you show love, but you have to stop. Get them a spoon, and they'll thank you for it later in life.

Thank you.



PINTEREST: IT'S WHAT EVERYONE IS TALKING ABOUT

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Pinterest is an online service that allows consumers to 'pin' images that they find on the Internet to virtual 'bulleting boards'. By 'pinning' an image of a 2-piece charcoal grey Banana Republic suit you are reminding yourself and the rest of the community your desire for that item. Users can organize their pins into different categories ("boards" in Pinterest speak). Wedding, home, food, sports are some of the popular categories. If you are planning a wedding you can create a board that is a collage of images that represent the visual components (shoes to table settings) of your big day. The site also allows you to follow boards of your friends, celebrities and in general the pulse of the entire Pinterest community.

In the three years of their existence Pinterest have grown into an online social juggernaut boasting 70 million active users. 80% of who are women. The time people spend on their site is truly impressive: an average of one hour a day, which is substantially higher than other social networks - Twitter (36 minutes) and Facebook (12 minutes). Celebrities love Pinterest and traditional media swoons at any mention of it. They have raised over \$340 million of venture capital from Silicon valley (Pinterest HQ is in San Francisco) at a valuation of \$3.8 billion USD. To put that in perspective, Sears Holdings Corporation (parent company of Sears USA and CA) has a net worth of \$5.2 billion USD. The billion dollar... or to be exact the \$3.8 billion dollar question is how are they going to build a sustainable profitable business? How do you convert 'moms who pin images of baby clothes' into dollars?

Two words: online commerce.

In the US, online commerce accounts for \$263 billion and is growing 15% annually compared to traditional commerce growing at 3% a year. By 2020 money spent online to purchase products and services will be greater than traditional brick and motor store purchases. If Pinterest play their cards right, majority of consumers will find products they love on Pinterest first. They will be inspired by home decoration tips on their favourite board, clicking on a picture of a mahogany coffee table that takes them to Target.com where they will purchase it. Target will pay a lot of money to Pinterest for bringing that high valued customer to them. Pinterest will continue to provide a free service to the consumer and charge the BestBuys and HomeDepots of the world for driving highly qualified traffic and/or promoting their products on Pinterest.com. If Pinterest can influence 10% of all online commerce and charge a commission (2% of all sales) they can easily deliver \$500 million in yearly revenue.

It's not beyond imagination to live in a world where Pinterest is the 'search engine for products', placing it in direct competition with that other internet giant - Google. The battle has only just begun.

கனடாவில் வாழும் தமிழ்ப் பிள்ளைகளின் வளர்நிலையும் எதிர்கால வாழ்வியல் பற்றிய தொலைநோக்கும்

-பேராசிரியர் இ. பாலசுந்தரம்-



கனடாவில் சுமார் மூன்றரை இலட்சத்திற்கும் மேற்பட்ட தமிழ் மக்கள் வாழ்கின்றனர். இவர்களிற் பெரும்பாலானோர் ரொறன்ரோ பெரும்பாகத்திலும் அதனைச் சூழவுள்ள நகரங்களிலுமே தங்கியுள்ளனர். இங்கு புலம்பெயர்ந்து வந்தவர்களில் மிகப் பெரும்பான்மையோரின் வருகை 1983 க்குப் பின்னரே இடம் பெற்றது. எனவே கனடாத் தமிழரின் வரலாறு 30 ஆண்டு காலத்தைக் கொண்ட தாகும். இப்போது இங்கேயுள்ள பாடசாலைகளில் பயிலும் தமிழ் மாணவர்களில் 95 வீதத்திற்கும் அதிகமானோர் கனடாவில் பிறந்தவர்களாவர். அனைத்துலக மொழிக் கல்வித் திட்டத்தின் கீழ் தமிழ் வகுப்புகளுக்குச் செல்லும் மாணவர்களில் 99 வீதமானோர் கனடாவில் பிறந்தவர்களாகவே உள்ளனர். எனவே கனடாவிலுள்ள தமிழ் மாணவர் எனக் கூறும்போது அவர்கள் கனடாவில் பிறந்தவர்கள் எனபதைக் கருத்திற்கொள்ள வேண்டும்.

தமிழ்ப் பிள்ளைகள் பல்லினப் பண்பாட்டுச் சூழலில் வளர்கிறார்கள். பல்லினக் குழுமங் களைச் சேர்ந்த பிள்ளைகளுடன் இணைந்து ஆரம்பக் கல்வி முதல் பல்கலைக்கழகக் கல்விவரை கற்கிறார்கள். அவர்களது இளமைக்கால கல்விச் சூழலும் பொழுதுபோக்குகளும் பல்லினப் பண்பாட்டுச் சூழலின் பாதிப்புகளுக்கு உட்படுகின்றன. தமிழ்ப் பிள்ளைகளின் பழக்க வழக்கங்கள், நடையுடை பாவனைகள் என்பன அவர்கள் பழகும் சமூகச் சூழல்களுக்கும் பயிலும் கல்விச் சூழலுக்கும் இயைவாகவே காணப்படுகின்றன. எனவே இவர்களின் எதிர்காலம் பற்றிச் சிந்திக்கும் போது பல்வேறுபட்ட சமூக - கலாசார விடயங்கள் முக்கியத்துவம் பெறுகின்றன. இளைய தலை முறையினரின் எதிர்காலம் அவர்கள் பெற்ற கல்வி, அனுபவம், திறன்கள் என்பவற்றைத் தக்க முறையில் பயன்படுத்தி தக்க தொழில் வாய்ப்புப் பெற்று, முன்னேறிச் செல்வதில் தங்கியுள்ளது. இதற்குப் பெற்றோரின் வழிகாட்டலும் அவசியமாகின்றது. பெற்றோர் தமது விருப்பு வெறுப்பு என்ற சுயநலப் போக்கான வரையறைக்குள் பிள்ளைகளைக் கட்டுப்படுத்தி அவர்களது முன்னேற்றத்துக்கு தடை விதிக்காது, அவர்களுக்குத் துணையாகச் செயற்படுவதே அவர்களது முன்னேற்றத்திற்கு உகந்த வழிமுறையாகும்.

பெற்றோரது சிந்தனை பொதுவாகத் தமது பிள்ளை மருத்துவராக அல்லது பொறியியலாள ராகப் படிக்க வேண்டும் என்பதோடு, தம் குடும்ப அந்தஸ்து, பிள்ளையின் திருமணம், வருமானம், புகழ் போன்றவற்றிலும் அக்கறை கொண்டிருக்கும். ஒரு காலத்தில யாழ்குடாநாட்டில வைத்தியர் மகன் வைத்தியராகவும், பொறியியலாளர் மகன் பொறியியலாளராகவும் வர வேண்டும் எனபது ஒரு வழக்கமாகவும் இருந்தது. அரச உத்தியோகம் புருஷ இலட்சணமெனக் கருதப்பட்ட காலமுண்டு. காரணம் தடையற்ற வருமானமும், பல வித சலுகைகளும் கிடைக்கும் என்பதாகும். அவர்களின் வழிவந்தோர் இன்று கனடாவிலும் வாழ்கிறார்கள். அவர்கள் வித்தியாசமான வாழ்வியல் எதிர்பார்ப்பு களுடன் வாழ்ந்து கொண்டிருக்கிறார்கள். சாதி அடிப்படையில் நமது சமூகத்தில் தொழில் செய்வது எமது தாயகத்தில் மரபு வழிவந்த முறையாக இருந்து வந்துள்ளது. நாவிதன் மகன் நாவிதனாகவும், வணிகன் மகன் வணிகனாகவும், நாதஸ்வரம் வாசிப்பவரின் மகன் அத்தொழிலைப் புரிபவனாகவும் செயற்பட்டு வந்துள்ளனர். இது சாதியக் கோட்பாட்டினையும் அதன் ஆதிக்கத்தினையும் வளர்க்க உதவியது மட்டுமன்றி, நம் மக்களின் முற்போக்கான, பொருளாதார, சமூக வளர்ச்சிக்கான சிந்தனைகள் வளரவும் விடவில்லை. இதனால் திறமைகள் சிறைப்பட்டிருந்தன. தகுதியும் திறனும் உடையோருக்கு முன்னுரிமையும் வாய்ப்புகளும் அளிக்கப்படவில்லை. ஆனால் புலம்பெயர் நாடு களின் வாழ்க்கை முறை அத்தகைய சாதியக் கட்டுப்பாடுகளுக்குத் தலைமுழுக்குப் போட்டு விட்டது. ஒதுக்கிவைக்கப்பட்ட குழுமத்தைச் சேர்ந்த மாணவர் உயர்கல்வி கற்று, எல்லோருடனும் தம் தகுதிகளுடன் சமமாகப் பங்குபெறும் வாய்ப்பினை இந்நாட்டுக் கல்வி, தொழில்வாய்ப்பு, அரசி யல் உரிமைகள் என்பன அளித்துள்ளன.

எதிர்கால வாழ்வியல் பற்றிய தொலைநோக்கும்.... தொடர்ச்சி....

பிள்ளையின் வளமான எதிர்கால வாழ்க்கைக்குரிய அடித்தளம் பிள்ளையின் வளர்ப்பில் தொடங்குகிறது. "பிள்ளை நல்லவனாவதும் வல்லவனாதும் அன்னை வளர்ப்பினிலே.." என்பது உண்மையாகும். இந்நாட்டில் பிள்ளை வளர்ப்பு என்பது மிகப் பெரியதொரு பொறுப்பு வாய்ந்த செயற்பாடாகும். இந்நாட்டின் பொருளாதார அமைப்பில் கணவனும் மனைவியும் வேலை செய்ய வேண்டியுள்ளது. வேலை செய்யும் தாய்மாருக்கு ஓராண்டு சம்பள வேலைவிடுப்பு உண்டு. அதன் பிற்பாடு பிள்ளையைப் பிள்ளைப் பராமரிப்பு இடங்களில் விட்டுச்செல்ல வேண்டிய நிலைப்பாடுண்டு. அதனால் பிள்ளை முற்றாக அந்நியச் சூழலில் வளர்கிறது. அங்குள்ள பழக்க வழக்கங்கள், மொழிநடை என்பவற்றை எளிதில் கற்றுக்கொள்கிறது.

அப்பிள்ளை தொடர்ந்து, பாலர்பாடசாலையில் சேர்க்கப்படுகிறது. ஆறு ஆண்டுகள் அப் பிள்ளையைப் பாடசாலைக்கு அழைத்துச் செல்லுதல், பின்னர் வீட்டுக்கு அழைத்து வருதல், பின்னர் அப் பிள்ளைக்குத் துணையாக வீட்டிற் செயற்படுதல் முதலான பணிகளில் பெற்றோரில் ஒருவர் முழுநேரப் பொறுப்பாளராகச் செயற்படுகிறார். இந்த ஆரம்பகாலப் பயிற்சி பிள்ளையின் எதிர்காலத் திற்குரிய அடித்தளமாகிறது. இக்காலக்கட்டத்தில் பிள்ளை கற்றற் பயிற்சி, நல்லொழுக்கப் பயிற்சி, செம்மையான மொழிப்பயிற்சி மற்றும் பல்வேறு பழக்கவழக்கங்கள் என்பவற்றைக் கற்றுக்கொள்வ தோடு அவற்றையே தனது எதிர்கால ஏணிப்படிகளாகவும் கைக்கொள்கிறது. எனவே பிள்ளையின் ஆரோக்கியமான எதிர்காலத்திற்குரிய மிகப் பெரியதொரு பங்களிப்பைப் பிள்ளையின் பாலர் பருவத்தில் பெற்றோர் வழங்க வேண்டியுள்ளது. இப்பருவத்தில் பெற்றோர் தம் பிள்ளையைப் புறக்கணித்துச் செயற்படுவார்களாயின், பிள்ளையின் எதிர்காலம் கேள்விக்குறியாகிவிடும்.

அடுத்து இரண்டாம்நிலைப் பாடசாலையில் அவர்கள் சேரும்போது எதிர்காலம் பற்றிய சிந்தனைகளும் அவை பற்றிய முன்னெடுப்புகளும் முனைப்புப் பெறுகின்றன. அக்கட்டத்தில் தீர்க்கமான முடிபுகள் எடுப்பதற்குப் பெற்றோரும் பிள்ளைகளும் இணைந்து செயற்பட வேண்டியுள்ளது. பாடசாலையில் கற்பிக்கப்படும் பல்வேறு பாடநெறிகளில், தனக்குரிய பாடங்களைத் தெரிவு செய்தல் எல்லா மாணவருக்கும் எளிதான காரியமன்று. இத்தகைய சந்தர்ப்பங்களில் **"இலங்கைப் பட்டதாரிகள் சங்கம் கனடா"** ஆண்டுதோறும் நடத்தும் கல்விசார் கருத்தரங்குகளுக்குத் தம் பிள்ளைகளுடன் சென்று தேவையான தகவல்களைப் பெற்றுக் கொள்வதும் பிள்ளைகளின் எதிர்காலக் கற்கைநெறிகளைத் தெரிவுசெய்து கொள்வதற்குத் துணைசெய்வதாகும். பாடநெறி-களைத் தெரிவு செய்ய முன்னர் பெற்றோர் தம் பிள்ளைகளுடன் அவர்களின் கற்கைநெறி விருப்பு, எதிர்காலக் குறிக்கோள், ஈடுபாடு, ஆர்வம், கற்கும் திறன் முதலானவற்றையும் பெற்றோர் கருத்திற் கொள்ளவேண்டும். எனவே ஒன்பதாம் தரத்தில் சேரும்போது மாணவர் தமது எதிர்காலத்துக்குரிய தளத்தை ஓரளவு உணர்ந்துகொண்டு, அதற்கேற்பத் தம்மைத் தயார்ப்படுத்தும் கல்வியைத் தொடர்வதற்குப் பெற்றோரும் துணையாதல் அவசியம்.

பாடசாலைக் கல்வியை முடித்துக் கொண்டு பல்கலைக்கழகம் அல்லது சமூகக் கல்லூரி அல்லது தொழில் தேடுதல் ஆகிய துறைகளில் ஈடுபடுதல் இளந்தலை முறையினரின் எதிர் காலத்தின் இரண்டாவது முக்கிய கட்டமாகின்றது. பல்கலைக் கழகத்திற்கோ அல்லது சமூகக் கல்லூரிக்கோ உயர்கல்வியைத் தொடர்வதற்கு வாய்ப்பானதாகவும், தமக்கு விருப்பமானதாகவும் உள்ள பாடநெறிகளை மாணவர் தாமே தெரிவுசெய்துகொள்ளுதல் உகந்தது. பெற்றோரின் விருப்புக் காகவோ, அல்லது தன் நண்பரின் துணைவேண்டி அவர் தெரிவு செய்யும் கல்வி நிலையத்தையோ-கற்கைநெறியையோ தெரிவுசெய்தல் தவறாகும். சில மாணவர் தனது நண்பர் எதனைத் தெரிவு செய்கிறாரோ அப்பாடநெறிகளையே தாமும் தெரிவுசெய்து கொள்கின்றனர். பின்னர் அப்பாடநெறி-களை இடைநடுவே மாற்றிக்கொள்வதும், அப்பாட நெறியினைத் தொடரமுடியாது படிப்புக்கே முற்றுப்புள்ளி வைப்பதும் ஏற்படுகின்றன. இளந்தலைமுறையினரின் எதிர்காலச் சிந்தனையில் மூன்றாவது கட்டமாக அமைவது தொழில் தேடுதலும் குடும்ப வாழ்க்கையில் ஈடுபடுதலுமாகும். கனடாவில் வாழும் இளந்தலைமுறையினரின் திருமணம், குடும்ப வாழ்க்கை என்பன எல்லோரது கவனத்தையும் ஈர்ப்பனவாகவே உள்ளன. தாயகத்திலே தம் பிள்ளைகளின் திருமணவிடயத்தில் பெற்றோர் பெரும்பங்கு வகித்தனர். காதல் திருமணமாக இருந்தாலும்சரி, பேச்சுத் திருமணமாக இருந்தாலும்சரி இறுதியில் பெற்றோரின் தலையீட்டுடனேயே திருமணங்கள் நடைபெற்று வந்தன.

எதிர்கால வாழ்வியல் பற்றிய தொலைநோக்கும்.... தொடர்ச்சி....

பிள்ளைகளின் எதிர்கால வாழ்க்கை முறையைத் திட்டமிடுவதற்குப் பெற்றோர் பெரும்பங்காற்றினர். அதனால், தாயகத்தில் திருமண முறிவுகள் மிக மிகக் குறைவென்றே கூறலாம். இளம்தம்பதிகள் மணமுறிவு செய்துகொண்டு இன்னொருவரைத் திருமணம் செய்து வாழ்க்கை நடத்தும் போக்கு அங்கு இடம்பெற்றாலும் அத்தகைய நிகழ்வுகள் மிகமிக அரிதாகும். ஆனால் கனடாவில் திருமணமுறிவுகள் அதிகரித்துக் கொண்டு வருவதைப் பார்த்தால் தமிழர் பண்பாடும் குடும்ப விழுமியங்களும் கேள்விக்குறிக ளாகின்றன. இங்கு இளம்தம்பதிகள் பெற்றோரின் அல்லது உறவினர்களின் அறிவுரைகளுக்குச் செவிமடுக்காது, தம் எண்ணப்படி நடப்பதாலேயே இத்தகைய கவலைக்குரிய நிகழ்வுகள் ஏற்படு கின்றன. கனடாவில் கல்வி கற்ற இளைய தலைமுறையினர் இந்நாட்டுச் சட்ட ஒழுங்கு விதிமுறை களை ஓரளவுக்கு அறிந்தவர்கள். இங்கு பெண்கள் தனித்து வாழக் கூடிய சட்டப் பாதுகாப்பும், பொருளாதார அமைப்பும் சாதகமாக இருப்பதால் அதிகமான மணமுறிவுகள் ஏற்படுவதாகக் கூறப்படுகிறது. பெற்றோர், உறவினர், நண்பர் என்போரின் அறிவுரைகளுக்குச் செவிமடுக்காது, இளம்தம்பதிகள் தாம் விரும்பியவாறே எளிதில் மணமுறிவுகளை ஏற்படுத்திக் கொள்கிறார்கள்.

தாயும் தந்தையும் வேலைப் பழுக்களோடு குடும்பத் தலைமையை ஏற்று நடத்தும்போது, அப்பொறுப்பை வளர்ந்த பிள்ளைகள் ஏற்று நடப்பதாகவும் இல்லை. அத்துடன் வளர்ந்த பிள்ளைகள் தம் விடயத்தில் பெற்றோர் தலையிடக் கூடாது என்ற எதிர்பார்ப்புடன் செயற்பட்டு வருகின்றார்கள். அவர்கள் சுதந்திரமாக இயங்கவே விரும்புகின்றனர். இளைய தலைமுறையினரின் காதல் வாழ்க்கை, திருமணம், குடும்ப வாழ்க்கை என்பன அவர்களின் கைகளிலேயே தங்கியிருக்கின்றன என்பதே உண்மை. மேலும் இளந்தலைமுறையினருக்கும் பெற்றோருக்குமிடையில் உளப்பாட்டுத் தன்மையான தொடர்புகொள்ளல் திறன்கள் (Positive communication Skills) அற்றதொரு சூழல் இங்கு காணப்படு கிறது. இதனால் பிள்ளைகளைத் தம் கட்டுப்பாட்டுக்குள் வைத்துக்கொள்ள முடியாமலும், அவர் களைத் தம் அன்பின் அரவணைப்பினால் நெறிப்படுத்த இயலாமலும் தத்தளிக்கின்றனர். இதனால் இளையதலைமுறையினர் தம்மனம்போன போக்கில் முடிபுகளை எடுத்து அவலப்படும் நிலைக்கு ஆளாகின்றனர். ஆயினும் பெற்றோருக்கு மதிப்பளித்து அவர்கள் காட்டும் வழியில் செல்லும் இளையதலைமுறையினர் நல்வழியில் அமைதியாகவே கனடாவில் வாழ்ந்து கொண்டிருக்கின்றனர் என்பதும் சிறப்பாகக் குறிப்பிடத் தக்கதாகும்.

வளர்ந்த பிள்ளைகள் தம் அந்தரங்க விடயங்களில் பெற்றோர் தலையிடக் கூடாதென்பதால், வளர்ந்த பெண்பிள்ளைகளின் தாயோ தந்தையோ இதில் அக்கறை காட்டாதிருக்கமுடியுமா? குடும்ப கௌரவம், சமூக மதிப்பு என்ற விடயங்களுக்கு இளந்தலைமுறையினர் மதிப்பு அளிப்பதாகவும் இல்லை. இளந்தலைமுறையினரின் அந்தரங்க விடயங்களின் பரிமாற்றம் கைத்தொலைபேசி, மின் அஞ்சல், முகப்புத்தகம், மின்உரையாடல் என்பனவற்றினூடாகவே நடைபெறுகின்றன. பெற்றோர் இவற்றினூடான அவர்களின் அந்தரங்கங்களை அறிய முற்படும்போது பல பிரச்சினைகள் ஏற்படு கின்றன. அல்லாமலும் இந்நாட்டுச் சூழலில் இளந்தலைமுறையினர் வீட்டுக்கு வெளியே நடத்தும் சந்திப்புகள், வீட்டுக்கு வெளியே தங்கியிருத்தல் போன்ற செயற்பாடுகள் அவர்களது எதிர்காலத் தைப் பாதிக்கும் விடயங்களாக உள்ளன. மேற்கு நாடுகளில் வழக்கிலுள்ள "டேற்றிங்" என்பது மேற் கத்திய வாழ்வியல் பண்பாட்டுக்குப் பொருந்தலாம். ஆனால் இத்தகைய பழக்கமுடைய ஒரு பெண்ணை எந்தத் தமிழ் மகன் உள்ளத் தூய்மையோடு திருமணம் செய்வார்? தமிழ்ச் சமூகத்தில் டேற்றிங் என்பது தமிழ்ப் பண்பாட்டுக்கு ஏற்புடையதொரு செயலன்று. இது சரியா பிழையா என்று ஆராய்ச்சி செய்யும் இடம் இதுவன்று. இரண்டாம் நிலைப் பாடசாலையில் பயிலும் வளரிளம் பருவத்தினர் இச்செயற்பாடுகளில் பெற்றோருக்குத் தெரியாமல் ஈடுபடுகின்றனர். இது ஆணுக்கும் பெண்ணுக்கும் பொதுவான கணிப்பு. இதனால் பல பிள்ளைகள் பெற்றோருடன் முரண்பட்டுக்கொண்டு பெற்றோரைப் பிரிந்து தனியே வாழ்கின்ற நிலை ஏற்படுவதால், அவர்களது எதிர்கால குடும்ப வாழ்க்கை ஏதோ ஒருவகையில் பாதிப்புக்கு உள்ளாவதை எவரும் தடுக்க முடியாததாகிறது இவ்வகையில் இளந்தலைமுறையினரில் கணிசமானோர் தம் எதிர்கால வாழ்வுக்குத் தாமே காரணர்களாக மாறிவிடுகின்ற போக்கே காணப்படுகின்றது.

எதிர்கால வாழ்வியல் பற்றிய தொலைநோக்கும்.... தொடர்ச்சி....

பிள்ளைகளுக்கு நல்லன செய்வதையே பெற்றோர் விரும்புகின்றனர். ஆனால் இதில் பெற்றோர் தலையிட முற்படும்போது பல பிரச்சினைகள் தோன்றுகின்றன. பிள்ளைகள் தாங்கள் தீர்மானிக்கும் வாழ்வியல் எடுப்புகளுக்கு அவர்களே பொறுப்பாளிகள் ஆகின்றனர். இதில் பெற்றோரைக் குறை கூறுவதற்கு இடமில்லை. அனுபவம் வாய்ந்த பெற்றோரின் சொல்லுக்கு மதிப்பளிக்காது, தாமே தமது விருப்பப்படி திருமணம் செய்து கொள்ளும் விடயமும் சிந்தனைக் உரியதாகும். பல்கலைக்கழகத்தில் ஒன்றாகப் படித்தோர் அல்லது ஒரே இடத்தில் தொழில் புரிந்தோர் காதலித்துத் திருமணம் செய்யும் நிலைப்பாடு இயற்கையானது. இதில் ஒரே இனம் அல்லது வேறு இனம் சம்பந்தப்பட்டிருக்கலாம். இதனால் எதிர்காலத்தில ஏற்படும் குடும்பப் பிரச்சனைகளுக்கு அவர்களே பதில் காண வேண்டிய நிலை உருவாகிறது.

Famous Quotes



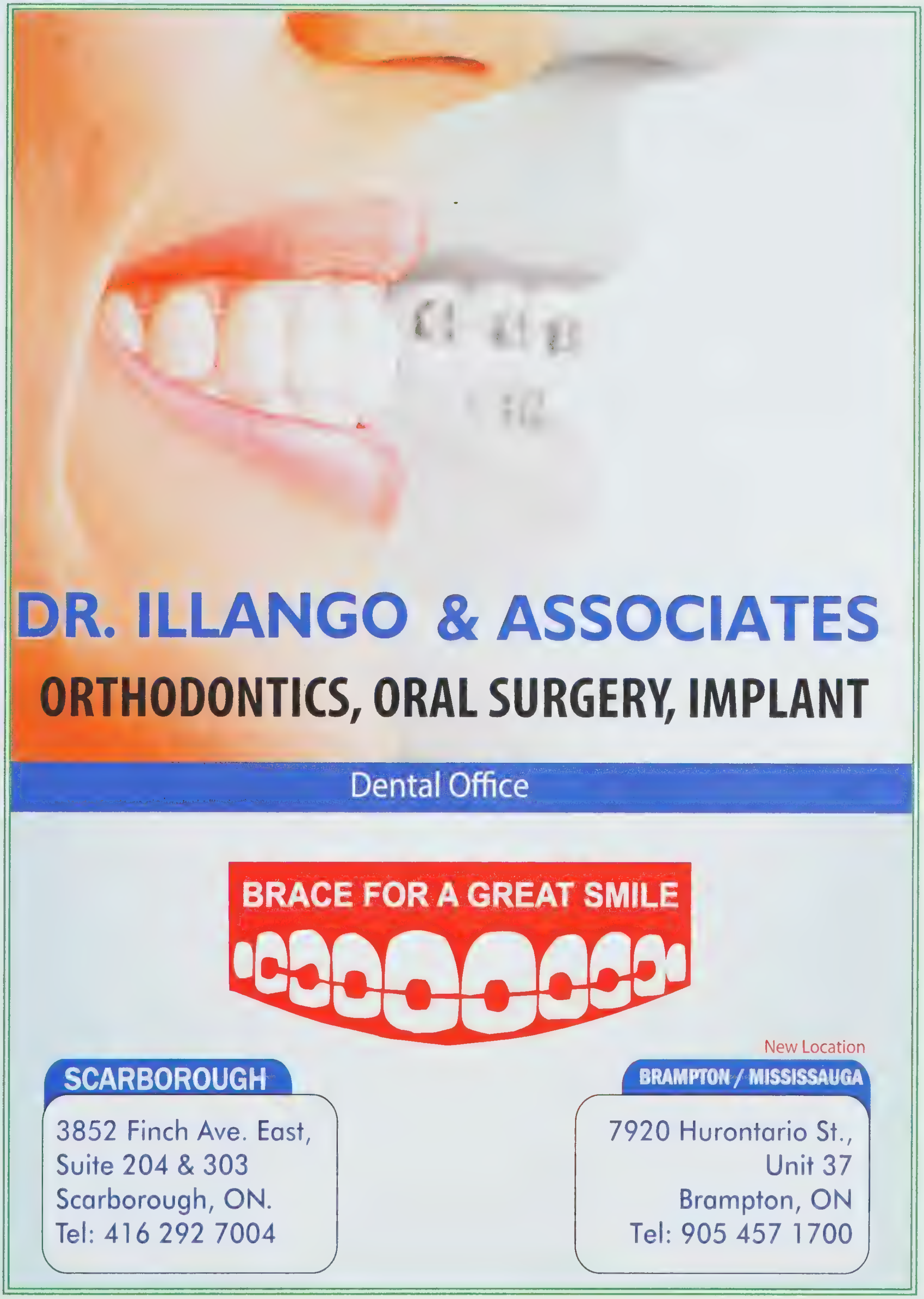
"We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care about what you think. Words are secondary. Thoughts live; they travel far."

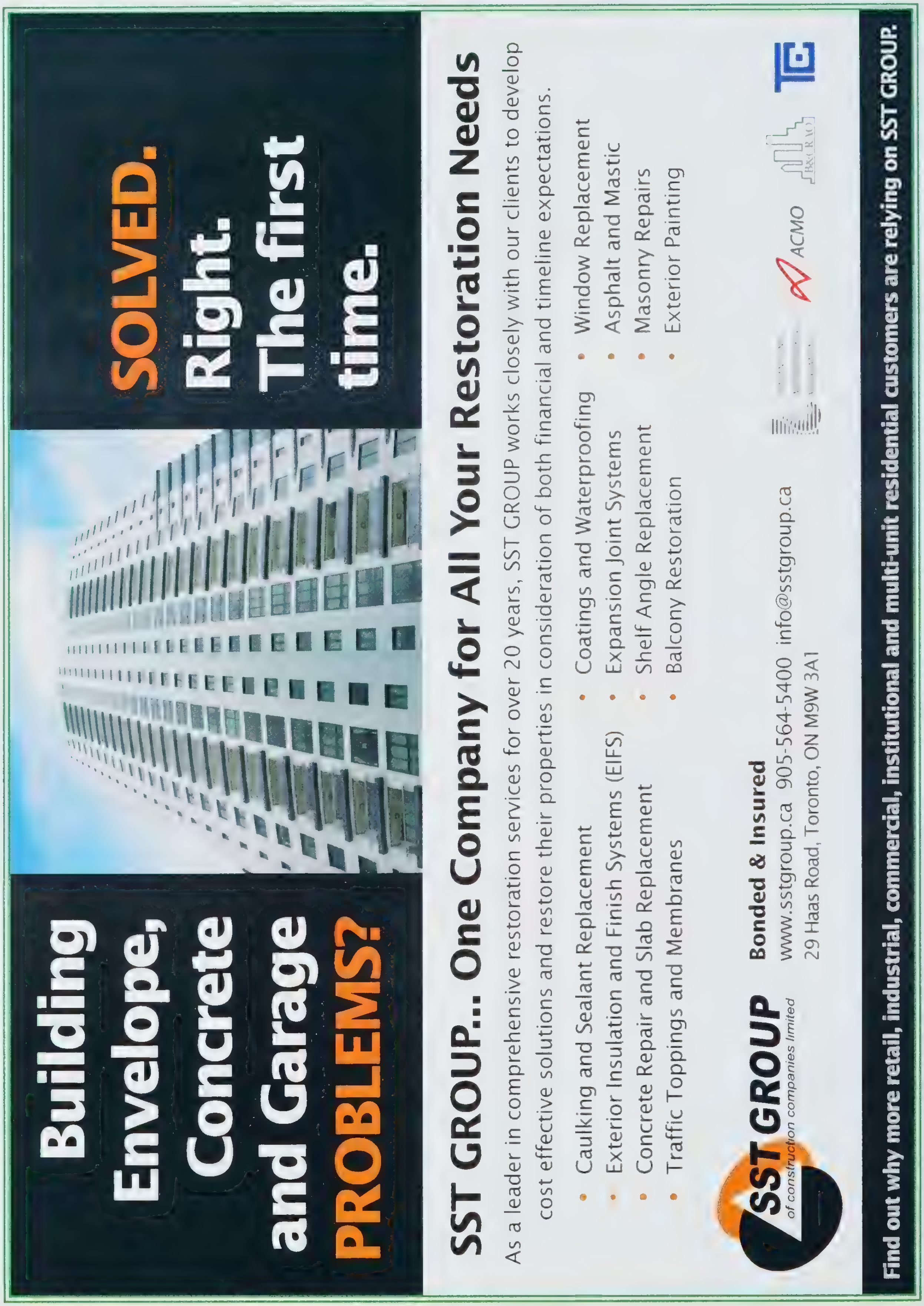
Swami Vivekananda

Take up one idea.
Make that one idea your life - think of it,
dream of it, live on that idea.
Let the brain, muscles, nerves,
every part of your body, be full of that idea,
and just leave every other idea alone.
This is the way to success.

Swami Vivekananda




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கலாநிதி.எஸ்.சிவநாயகமூர்த்தி, முன்னாள் பிரதிக் கல்விப் பணிப்பாளர்



ASSOCIATION OF SRILANKAN GRADUATES OF CANADA(ASGC) INCLUSIVE SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SERVICES OF YORK REGION DISTRICT BOARD GUIDANCE FOR HIGHER STUDIES WORKSHOP
for High School Students (Grades 9-12) & Parents

கனடா இலங்கைப்பட்டதாரிகள் சங்கம் 1989ஆம் ஆண்டு ஆரம்பிக்கப்பட்டு, கடந்த 24 வருடங்களாக உயர்கல்வி மாணவருக்காகப் பல சிறந்த சேவைகளை ஆற்றிவருகிறது. இதற்குக் காலத்திற்குக் காலம் நிர்வாகசபைகளில் பதவி வகித்து வந்த உறுப்பினர்களும் ஆதரவளித்த பெற்றோர்களுமே காரணம் என்பது குறிப்பிடத்தக்கதாகும். இதனுடைய முக்கிய குறிக்கோள் தமிழ்ச் சமூகத்தின் கல்வித் தரத்தை உயர்த்துவதும், சமூகத்தில் பல்துறை சார்ந்த நிபுணர்களை உருவாக்குவதுமாகும். இந்நோக்கோடு இச்சேவைகளை கட்டணங்கள் எதுவுமின்றித் தமிழ்மக்களுக்கு இச்சங்கம் கடந்த பல ஆண்டுகளாகச் செய்து வருகிறது. இத்திட்டங்களின் வரிசையில் கடந்த பத்தாண்டுகளுக்கு மேலாக ஆண்டு தோறும் தெரிவு செய்யப்பட்டு பதவி வகித்து வந்த நிர்வாகசபை உறுப்பினர்கள் அனைவரும் மேலும் பலசிறந்த சேவைகளையாற்றி வந்துள்ளனர். பொதுவாகக் கூறுவதானால் புதிய குடிவரவாளர்களுக்கான கருத்தரங்குகள், புதிய குடிவரவாளர்களான பட்டதாரிகள், தொழில்களைப் பெற்றுக் கொள்வதற்கான கருத்தரங்குகள், தொழில் சந்தைகள், கணனிக் கருத்தரங்குகள், வைத்தியசாலைகளுக்கு நிதி உதவியளித்தற்கான, கார்கழுவுதல், நடைபவனிகள், படக்காட்சிகள், மற்றும் யாழ், மட்டக்களப்புப் பல்கலைக் கழகங்களுக்கு தேவையான நூல்களைச் சேகரித்து அனுப்புதல், உயர்கல்வி மாணவர்களுக்கான புலமைப்பரிசில் அளித்தல், உயர் கல்வி மாணவர்களுக்கான வழிகாட்டற் பட்டறைகள், ஆண்டுமலர் வெளியீடு, வருடாந்தக்கலைநிகழ்வும் இராப்போசனவிருந்தும், போன்ற பல நிகழ்ச்சிகளைத் திட்டமிட்டுச் செய்து வருகிறார்கள்.

இவ்வாறான சேவைகளில் கனடா-இலங்கைப் பட்டதாரிகள் சங்கம் வருடாவருடம் நடாத்தும் உயர்கல்வி மாணவர்களுக்கான வழிகாட்டற்பட்டறை மிக முக்கியமானதாகவும் உயர்கல்வி மாணவர்களுக்கும் பெற்றோர்களுக்கும் அதிக பயனுள்ளதாகவும் விளங்குகின்றது. அத்துடன் இவ் வழிகாட்டற்பட்டறை பலரின் பாராட்டுக்களையும் பெற்று வருகிறதென்பதும் குறிப்பிடத் தக்கதாகும். இச்சங்கமானது கனடாவில் உயர் பாடசாலைகளில், உயர்கல்வியைத் தொடரும் (9,10,11,12)ஆம் வகுப்பு மாணவர்களுக்கும் அவர்களின் பெற்றோர்களுக்கும் உயர்கல்வி சம்பந்தமான பல தகவல் களையும் அறிந்து கொள்வதற்கான வாய்ப்புக்களை வழங்குவதோடு, அவைபற்றிய அறிவையும், விளக்கங்களையும் மாணவர்களுக்கும் அவர்களின் பெற்றோர்களுக்கும் அளித்து வருகிறது. இதற்கென முன்னைய காலங்களில் கனடாவில் பல்கலைக் கழகங்களில் சேவையாற்றிவந்த பல துறைகளையும் சார்ந்த நிபணர்களையும், மற்றும் கனடாவில் பணிபுரியும் எங்கள் சமூகத்திலுள்ள இளைய பட்டதாரிகளையும் வரவழைத்து அவர்கள் மூலம் உயர்கல்வி சம்பந்தமான விளக்கங் களையும் அவைபற்றிய அறிவையும், அவர்களின் அனுபவங்களையும் மாணவர்களுக்கும் பெற்றோர் களுக்கும் இவ்வழிகாட்டல் பட்டறைகள் மூலம் கொடுத்து வந்துள்ளது. இதே வரிசையில் கடந்த மூன்று வருடங்களாக எமது சமூகத்தினரில் பலதுறைகளுக்கும் வேண்டிய அனுபவமும் ஆற்றலும் அறிவும் மிக்க பலதுறை சார்ந்த நிபுணர்களும் கிடைக்கக் கூடிய வாய்ப்புக்கள் நிறையவே உள்ளதால் முற்று முழுதாக எமது சமூகத்தைச்சார்ந்த அனுபவமும் ஆற்றலும்மிக்க கனடாவில் தொழில்புரியும் பல்துறைசார் நிபுணர்களின் சேவைகளைப்பெற்று அவர்கள்மூலம் உயர்கல்வியைத் தொடரும் மாணவர்களுக்கும் பெற்றோர்களுக்குமான கலந்துரையாடல்களையும், அவர்களுக்கான பாடநெறிகளுக்கான விளக்கங்களையும் அறிவையும் இலவசமாகக் கொடுத்து வருகிறார்கள்.

வழிகாட்டற் பட்டறையும் அதனால் பெறும் நன்மைகளும்.... தொடர்ச்சி....

இதற்கான ஆதரவும் ஆர்வமும் பெற்றோர்கள் மத்தியிலும் மாணவர்கள் மத்தியிலும் அதிகரித்தும் வருகின்றன. கடந்த மூன்று ஆண்டுகளில் கடந்த காலங்களை விடப் பன்மடங்கு மாணவர்களின் பங்குபற்றும் விருப்பும், தொகையும், பெற்றோரின் ஆர்வமும் வரவும் அதிரித்துள்ளதிலிருந்து இதை நன்கு அறியக் கூடியதாகவுள்ளது.

இக்கருத்தரங்குகள் மூலம் மாணவர்கள் எவ்வாறு தொழில்களைத் தேர்ந்தெடுக்கலாம், பல்கலைக் கழகங்களை அல்லது கல்லூரிகளை எவ்வாறு தெரிவு செய்யலாம், புலமைப் பரிசில்களுக்கான விளக்கங்கள், அவற்றுக்கான விண்ணப்பப் படிவங்களை நிரப்புதல், அவற்றுக்கான அனுமதியைப் பெறுதல் போன்ற பல விடயங்களை மாணவர்கள் அறிந்து கொள்ளக் கூடிய முறைகளில் இவை பற்றிய ஆலோசகைளும், வழிகாட்டல்களும் வழங்கப்பட்டு வருகின்றன. இவற்றுடன் இக்கருத்தரங்குகளில் முக்கியமாக மாணவர்கள் உயர்பாடசாலைகளில் எவ்வாறு பாட நெறிகளைத் தங்கள் விருப்புகளுக்கேற்பத் தெரிவு செய்யலாம், என்னென்ன துறைகளுக்கு என்னென்ன பாடங்களை உயர்பாடசாலைகளில் தெரிவு செய்து கற்கவேண்டும்? என்னென்ன துறைகள் ஒவ்வொரு பல்கலைக் கழகங்களிலும் நற்பெயர் கொண்டு விளங்குகின்றன? எத்துறை களுக்குக் கனடாவில் தற்பொழுது அதிக வேலைவாய்ப்புக்கள் உள்ளன, போன்ற பல விளக்கங்களையும் அவை பற்றிய விபரங்களையும் அவற்றுக்கான கல்விச் செயற்பாடுகள் பற்றிய பல தகவல்களையும் இவ்வழிகாட்டற் பட்டறைகளில் மாணவர்கள் பெற்றுக் கொள்வார்கள். இவை பற்றி வழிகாட்டற்பட்டறைகளில் கலந்துரையாடும் பல்துறைசார் நிபுணர்கள் பெற்றோருக்கும் மாணவர்களுக்கும் விளக்குவார்கள். அத்துடன் அவர்களின் கேள்விகளுக்கும் சந்தேகங்களுக்கு மான பதில்களையும் கொடுப்பார்கள். அது மட்டுமன்றி, மாணவர்களுக்கான கருத்தரங்குகள், அவர்களின் பாட நெறிகளுக்கேற்பத் தனித் தனியாக அவர்களின் பாடநெறிகளைச் சார்ந்த நிபுணர்களாலேயே நடாத்தப் பெறும். பெற்றோருக்கான கலந்துரையாடல்கள் தனியாகவும் வேறாக வும் இடம் பெறும். இவ்வழிகாட்டல் பட்டறையில் மாணவர்களுக்கான பாடநெறிகளை உயிரியல் விஞ்ஞானம், பொறியியல், வர்த்தகம், கனிைத்துறை எனப் பிரிக்கப்பட்டு அப்பாட நெறிகளைத் தொடரும் மாணவர்களுக்குத் தனித் தனியாக கருத்தரங்குகள் நடைபெறும். இத்தலைப்புக்கள் மாணவர்கள் பங்குபற்றும் பாடநெறிகளுக்கேற்ப மாற்றமடையலாம். அத்தோடு இக்கருத்தரங்கு வகுப்புக்களில் மாணவர்களின் விருப்புக்கும் தகமைக்கும் ஏற்ப இரண்டு கருத்தரங்குகளில் பங்குபற்ற முடியும். இவைகாலை வேளை, மாலைவேளை எனப் பிரிக்கப்பட்டு இரண்டு நேரமாக நடைபெறும். இதற்கான ஒழுங்குகளை நடைபெறும் கல்லூரிகளில் பட்டதாரிகள்சங்க உறுப்பினர்கள் சிறப்பாகச் செய்வார்கள். ஒவ்வொரு வேலைத்திட்டத்தையும் அவற்றுக்கென பட்டதாரிகள் சங்க உறுப்பினர்கள் பொறுப்பேற்றுச் செய்வார்கள்.

ஆரம்பகாலங்களில் ரொறன்ரோ மாவட்டப் பாடசாலைச் சபையின் உதவியுடன் ரொறன்ரோ வில் இக்கருத்தரங்குகளை கனடா ஸ்ரீலங்காப் பட்டதாரிகள் சங்கத்தினர் நடாத்தி வந்தனர். பின்னர் 2006ஆம் ஆண்டு முதல் யோக்பிராந்திய மாவட்டப்பாடசாலைச் சபையுடன் இணைந்து மார்க்கம் நகரில் வருடாவருடம் நடாத்தி வருகின்றனர். இக்கருத்தரங்கு வகுப்புக்களில் பங்குபற்றும் மாணவர்களுக்கு எங்கள் சமூகத்திலுள்ள இளம் பட்டதாரிகள், அந்தத்தப் பாடநெறிகளுக்கான நிபுணர்கள், தமது அனுபவங்களையும், துறைகள் பற்றிய அறிவையும் வழங்குவதோடு, மாணவர் களுக்கான கேள்விகளுக்கும் சந்தேகங்களுக்கும் சரியான விடைகளையும் விளக்கங்களையும் அளிப்பார்கள்.

கடந்த பல வருடங்களாக கனடா இலங்கைப் பட்டதாரிகள் சஙகத்தினால் நடாத்தப் பட்டு வரும் உயர்கல்வி மாணவர்களுக்கான வழிகாட்டற் பட்டறைகள் மூலம் ஆயிரக்கணக்கான உயர்கல்வி மாணவர்கள் பயன்பெற்று வந்துள்ளனர். இதில் கனடாவிலே படித்துப் பலதுறைகளிலும் பட்டங்கள் பெற்ற இலங்கைத் தமிழர்களான நிபுணத்துவம் உடையவர்கள் கலந்து கொண்டு தங்கள் அனுபவங்களையும், மாணவர்களுக்கான ஆலோசனைகளையும், கருத்துக்களையும் வழங்கி வருகின்றனர்.

வழிகாட்டற் பட்டறையும் அதனால் பெறும் நன்மைகளும்.... தொடர்ச்சி....

அத்துடன் தமது பிள்ளைகள் என்ன படிக்கிறார்கள் என்ன துறைகளுக்குப் போக விரும்புகிறார்கள் என்ற விபரங்கள் எதையும் இறுதிவரை அறியாது காத்திருக்கும் பெற்றோர் களுக்கும், இவ்வழிகாட்டல் பட்டறை தங்கள் பிள்ளைகளின் கல்வி நிலைகளையும், அவர்களின் விருப்பையும் அறிந்து கொள்ளவும், அவர்களுக்கு உதவவும் இவ்வழிகாட்டற் பட்டறை ஒரு தளத்தை ஏற்படுத்திக் கொடுக்கிறது. இவ்வழிகாட்டற் பட்டறைகள் மூலம் பயன்பெற்ற பல மாணவர்களும் பெற்றோர்களும் இப்பட்டதாரிகள் சங்கத்தின் நிரவாகத்தினரை அழைத்துத் தங்கள் நன்றிகளையும் பாராட்டுக்களையும் தெரிவித்தும் வருகிறார்கள். இவ்வழிகாட்டற் பட்டறைக்கான அனுசரணையாளர்களாகக் கனடியன் தமிழ் பல்கலைக்கழகப் பழையமாணவர் சங்கம்(CANADIAN TAMIL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (CTAA), கனடாத் தமிழர் வைத்தியர் சங்கம் CANADIAN TAMIL MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (CTMA), ஸ்ரீலங்கா கணக்காளர் சங்கம் கனடா SRILANKAN ACCOUNTANTS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA (SAAC) என்பனவும் பங்கு வகிக்கின்றன. இக் கருத்தரங்குகள் நடைபெறும் திகதிகளும் இடமும் ஒவ்வொருவருடத்திலும் ஒக்டோபர் மாதத்தில் தொலைக்காட்சிகள், வானொலிகள், பத்திரிகைகள் மூலம் மாணவர்களுக்கும் பெற்றோர்களுக்கும் அறியத் தரப்படும். இதற்கு மாணவர்களோ, பெற்றோர்களோ எந்தக் கட்டணமும் செலுத்த வேண்டியதில்லை. உயர்கல்வி மாணவர்களுக்கான இவ்வழிகாட்டற் பட்டறைகளில் பங்கு பற்றுவதால் உயர்கல்வி மாணவர்களும் பெற்றோர்களும் அதிக பயன் பெறக்கூடியதாயிருக்கும் என்பதில் ஐயமில்லை.

பொன் மொழிகள்

வாழ்க்கையில் நீங்கள் வெற்றி பெற மூன்று வழிகள் :

1. பிறரைக்காட்டிலும் அதிகமாக அறிந்து கொள்ள முயலுங்கள்.
2. பிறரைக்காட்டிலும் அதிகமாக உழைக்கக் கற்றுக்கொள்ளுங்கள்.
3. பிறரைக் காட்டிலும் குறைவாக பிறரிடமிருந்து பெற முயலுங்கள்.

- வில்லியம் ஷேக்ஸ்பியர்

ஒரு பள்ளிக்கூடத்தைத் திறப்பவன் ஒரு சிறைச்சாலையை மூடுகிறான்.

- விக்டர் ஹியூகோ.

கல்வியின் வேர்களோ கசப்பானவை ஆனால் கனியோ இனிப்பானது.

- அரிஸ்டாட்டில்

என்னிடம் 6 நாணயமான நண்பர்கள் இருக்கின்றனர்.
அவர்கள்தான் எனக்கு எல்லாம் கற்றுத் தருகின்றனர்.
அவர்களுடைய பெயர்கள்: எங்கே?, என்ன?, எப்போது?, ஏன்?, எப்படி?, யார்?

- ருட்யார்ட் கிப்ளிங்.

நீங்கள் எப்போதும் வாழ்க்கையில் 4 விஷயங்களை மட்டும் உடைத்துவிடாதீர்கள்.
அதாவது: நம்பிக்கை, சத்தியம், உறவு, இதயம்.
ஏனெனில், இதில் எதையாவது உடைத்தால் அதிகமாக சத்தம் கேட்காது.
ஆனால் வலி அதிகமாக இருக்கும்

- சார்லஸ்

கண்ணெதிரே காணும் ஒவ்வொருவரையும் நம்புவது அபாயகரமானது.
அதைக் காட்டிலும் ஒருவரையும் நம்பாதிருப்பது மிகவும் அபாயகரமானது.

- அப்ரஹாம் லிங்கன்

PAPADOPOULOS & PRADHAN ARCHITECTS INC.

November 27th, 2013

Dear Sir/Madam,

Papadopoulos and Pradhan architects are pleased to congratulate the **Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada** for their support work in the Professional engineering services in Canada.

Sincerely,

PAPADOPOULOS AND PRADHAN ARCHITECTS INC.

George Papadopoulos
B. ARCH., O.A.A.M.R.A.I.C., N.C.A.R.B. (USA)

251 Consumers Road, Suite 1404, Toronto, On M2J 4R3 Tel: 416.490.0685 Fax 416.490.1408

DINNER - 2012















DINNER - 2012 CONTD..


















DEVELOPING LEADERS FOR TOMORROW

By Umesh Vallipuram

About CFLI

Leaders aren't born, they are nurtured and developed. This is the driving force behind Centre for Leadership and Innovation, which was launched in January 2012. CFLI was founded with the mission to build and promote leadership and innovation amongst Tamil Canadians and other multicultural communities. It is registered as a Non-Profit organization.

Times of great change require leaders who recognize and seize opportunities for innovation, a catalyst for a successful and rewarding future. CFLI's goal is to provide an inspiring and supportive environment that will help individuals become leaders and leverage their full potential to bring about innovative change.

To achieve this goal, our focus is to provide a continuous learning environment through a holistic training approach to nurture and develop the following skills amongst our future leaders:

- Public speaking
- Leadership qualities
- Self-confidence
- Communication and written skills
- Personal responsibilities
- Interpersonal and teamwork skills
- Political and social awareness

Youth Leadership Program (YLP)

In April 2012 we launched our first YLP initiative, a public speaking forum for kids aged 10-16. The goal of this program is to help kids become strong leaders of tomorrow, with primary focus on public speaking skills, something the school curriculum don't focus enough on. The response was tremendous and since then we've held 6 more sessions that ran for duration of 4 months each. Each session consists of 8 classes, for 2 hour duration, and held every other week. The final classes for each term are held in a large venue, where the participants are given the opportunity to speak and debate on a wide range of topics, with their parents in the audience.
Short Documentary Film Challenge

To challenge the kids at YLP, we took the program to another level this summer. The kids in the program were divided into five teams and were asked to produce a short documentary film that highlighted a social cause. Our emphasis here is to further develop individual leadership and team building skills. The documentaries produced by the kids were amazing. They produced documentaries on wide ranging topics including High School Dropouts, Living with Autism, and Arrange Marriages. These documentaries were showcased at a gala event in front of an audience of 250 people. The summer program was a huge success with the kids and the parents. We plan to offer this program again during the summer of 2014.

DEVELOPING LEADERS FOR TOMORROW CONTD....

About the Founders of CFLI

Kumar Ratnam, Sivan Ilangko and I are the co-founders of CFLI. Sivan Ilangko and I qualified as Chartered Accountants in Canada, and Kumar Ratnam is an IT consultant. For volunteers like us, it is so rewarding to see the deference the YLP program is making in these kids; kids who were shy and introverted blossoming into confident public speakers. All three of us grew up in Sri Lanka, where we weren't taught public speaking or leadership skills. When we entered the work force in Canada, it was a significant hurdle for us to overcome, as we were innately reserved and afraid to speak up. Well, we don't want our youth to face the same challenges. Our goal is to make a positive difference in their lives, to empower them to create their own success.

Currently we have 3 sessions at varying levels, and we plan to add a beginner program in January 2014. Parents can sign-up their children for this program through our website. For more information on the Youth Leadership Program, please visit our website at www.cflicanada.ca.

FAMOUS QUOTES

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
- *Nelson Mandela*

"A good head and good heart are always a formidable combination.
But when you add to that a literate tongue or pen, then you have something very special."
- *Nelson Mandela*

Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty.
Anyone who keeps learning stays young.
The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young.
- Henry Ford (1863-1947) American industrialist

"Great thoughts speak only to the thoughtful mind
but great actions speak to all mankind."
- Emily P. Bissell

"If you do not tell the truth about yourself,
you cannot tell it about other people."
- Virginia Woolf

"You make a living by what you earn,
you make a life by what you give."
- Anonymous

"Many of life's failures are experienced by people who did not realize
how close they were to success when they gave up."
- Thomas Edison

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Best Wishes to the
Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada

ADVANCES IN GENOME SEQUENCING AND IMPLICATIONS FOR HEALTH

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Every other South Asian migrant in North America knows someone being or been diagnosed with either "cancer", "coronary heart disease", or "diabetes". It is also widely accepted in the scientific and medical communities that the causes for these diseases are the interplay of factors from inborn characteristics of a person (genetics) and the factors affecting the way of life (environment). In this article the author would like to touch upon the basics of human genetics and how the recent advancements in that field have contributed to the advancement in human health.

DNA, RNA and Proteins

According to one of the basic principles of biology, the "Gene theory", the traits are passed from parents to offspring by way of reproduction through gene transmission. Genes carry the genetic information (encoded as DNA sequences) necessary to function as templates for RNA synthesis. In turn, messenger RNAs (one type of RNA) function as templates for protein synthesis. Proteins are large biological molecules, consisting of one or more chains of amino acid residues. Proteins perform a vast array of functions (catalyzing metabolic reactions, replicating DNA, responding to stimuli, and transporting molecules from one location to another) and also as structural proteins thus making a structural and functional organism.

Human Genome

The human genome contains over 3 billion DNA base pairs organized into 22 paired chromosomes, the X chromosome (one in males, two in females) and, in males only, one Y chromosome, all being large linear DNA molecules contained within the cell nucleus. The genome includes both the genes and the non-coding sequences of the DNA (that do not function as templates for the ultimate protein synthesis). In human genome around 21,000 protein coding genes have been identified.

Diseases and Genome

Based on their genetic contribution, human diseases can be classified as monogenic, chromosomal, or multifactorial. Monogenic diseases are caused by alterations in a single gene. These alterations can be either single nucleotide variation (SNV) or insertion and deletion of few nucleotides (InDels). Examples of these are Cystic fibrosis, Sickle-cell anemia, and some cancers. Chromosomal diseases, as their name implies, are caused by alterations in chromosomes. For instance, within an individual's genome, some chromosomes may be missing, extra chromosome copies may be present, or certain portions of chromosomes may be deleted or duplicated, and are known as structural variations (SVs). In Autism Spectrum Disorder and in most of the cancers the chromosomal SVs are observed. Finally, the vast majority of human diseases can be categorized as multifactorial.

ADVANCES IN GENOME SEQUENCING AND IMPLICATIONS FOR HEALTH CONTD...

Examples of these conditions include cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and a number of birth defects and psychiatric disorders. By definition, complex diseases are caused by variation in many genes, and they may or may not be influenced by environment.

In order to understand the role of genetics on diseases; it has become indispensable to elucidate the structure of the whole human genome and not the parts of it (genes). In the past from 1970s to early 2000s, and even now most of the genetic tests being done in hospitals are targeted towards the presence or absence of SNVs or InDels in one or few genes of interest. But without looking at the whole picture of the entire DNA in a particular human genome (personal genome) many important diagnostic patterns are missed and also most of the prescribed medical drugs do not function as intended in all the patients.

Whole genome sequencing

In the whole genome sequencing, the type and order of DNA base pairs (nucleotides) in the whole genome of an individual are determined. The Human Genome Project, an international scientific research project, was completed in April 2003 after spending $3,500,000,000 (3.5 billion dollars) and 13 years. It mapped 99% of all human DNA and produced a human genome reference map.

With the advent of new sequencing technologies and the availability of very fast computers, currently it takes about a week and less than $8000 (eight thousand dollars) to sequence a human genome. By June 2012, 69 nearly complete human genomes were publicly available including that of James Watson (co-discoverer of the structure of DNA and a Nobel Prize laureate) and Craig Venter (first to sequence the human genome). In the last few years, many large scale projects have been initiated by various countries to sequence large number of humans: For example,

- ★ The 1000 Genomes Project - to provide a comprehensive resource on human genetic variation - by multiple centres including Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, UK, and Broad Institute of Harvard and MIT, US.
- ★ International Cancer Genome Consortium (ICGC) project - to obtain a comprehensive description of genomic, transcriptomic and epigenomic changes in 50 different tumour types and/or subtypes which are of clinical and societal importance across the globe. - by ICGC including OICR.
- ★ 100,000 patients' genomes - to better understand certain diseases, help doctors diagnose patients earlier and tailor care plans to individuals. - By Genomics England.

Currently, published personal genomes predominantly represent individuals of European ancestry. Genomes from few individuals representing the Yoruba West-African, Han Chinese, South Korean, Khoisan and Bantu of Africa, Japanese, and Australian aborigines have also been published. Personal genome of a first Indian origin male was published in July 2012, while the personal genome of female from Kerala was published in August 2012. Under the 1000 Genomes Project personal genomes from 103 Sri Lankan Tamils in the UK are being sequenced. To-date we have not across any published records of personal genomes of Sri Lankan origin individuals.

ADVANCES IN GENOME SEQUENCING AND IMPLICATIONS FOR HEALTH CONTD...

It is believed that as soon as personal genome sequencing reaches the point that it is routinely available for individual patient care, it will have an immediate and practical positive impact on medical diagnosis and treatment and the current paradigm of medical practices will undergo a sea of changes.

Apart from enhancing the scientific and medical knowledge, many other lessons have also been learnt from the human sequencing projects; one of it is the diversity between individual humans are very minimal (about 150, 000 SNVs). It is also observed that various ethnic groups are interlinked to each other and pure race theory cannot be supported scientifically. These observations, if and when properly understood will lead to a realisation on the commonality of humans.

The author wishes thank his mentor Professor Kanagasabai Theivendirarajah for the motivation, encouragement and unending support during his scientific career. Recently Prof. Theivendirarajah and the author have started a collaborative study with the researchers in the University of Jaffna to sequence palmyrah plant.

Famous Quotes

Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation.
- John F. Kennedy

He who opens a school door, closes a prison.
- Victor Hugo (1802-1885) French poet, dramatist and novelist.

If a man empties his purse into his head, no man can take it away from him.
An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.
- Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) American statesman, scientist and philosopher.

If You are Wrong, Admit it Quickly and Emphatically"
- Dale Carnegie

"What moves you forward..... is the future in front of you, not the past behind you."
- unknown

"Love your mother, the most beautiful person on this earth. Our best critic yet our strongest supporter."
- unknown

"I prefer to be crazy and happy rather than normal and bitter."
- Paulo Coelho

"Never beg for a relationship. Be brave to accept the one who really wants to be with you. And reject the one who just pretends to be with you."
- unknown

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1991	N. Pradeepan	S. Gnananayakan	M. Baskaranathan
1992	A. S. Kanthasamy	S. Gnananayakan	S. Thirumuruga
1993	A. S. Kanthasamy	S. Gnananayakan	S. Thirumuruga
1994	S. Sathiamoorthy	C. Ramanathan	V. Nantheeswarar
1995	S. Sathiamoorthy	C. Ramanathan	V. Nantheeswarar
1996	M. Atputhanathan	K. Wijeyathungam	P. Vettivelu
1997	M. Atputhanathan	K. Wijeyathungam	P. Vettivelu
1998	K. Wijeyathungam	S. Sathiamoorthy	V. Ratnasingam
1999	K. Wijeyathungam	S. Sivanesan	A. Rasaratnam
2000	S. Sivanesan	C. Ramanathan	A. Rasaratnam
2001	S. Sivanesan	C. Ramanathan	K. Kanthasamy
2002	C. Ramanathan	V. Manivannan	K. Kanthasamy
2003	C. Ramanathan	Surren Balendran	A. Rasaratnam
2004	K. Theivendirarajah	Surren Balendran	A. Rasaratnam
2005	C. Ramanathan	Yoga Arulnamby	Arun Senathirajah
2006	P. Kanagaretnam	Yoga Arulnamby / C. Ramanathan	Arun Senathirajah
2007	K. Theivendirarajah	C. Ramanathan	Yaso Somalingam
2008	Suren Balendran	C. Ramanathan	Yaso Somalingam
2009	Yoga Arulnamby	V. Manivannan	Suganja Sinnathamby
2010	Yaso Somalingam	Pon. Balendran	Suganja sinnathamby
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◊ The York Region District School Board (YRDSB) for supporting the ASGC to conduct the Career Counseling workshop in Markham in November 2012 and November 2013 at Middlefield CI and Thiva Kulasingam & Suganja Sinnathamby for coordinating these popular events of our Association.

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◊ All kind hearted entrepreneurs and professionals for generously supporting our activities by advertising in this special edition of the "FOCUS 2013" magazine.

◊ Last but not least for the wonderful cooperation and understanding of the Fine Print & Gift for printing this colourful magazine in a timely fashion.